

No. 11.

"MODO ME THEBIS,"

MODO PONIT ATHENIS." HORACE.

THE MUSICAL

NOVEMBER,

MONTHLY,

1864.

DRAWING-ROOM MISCELLANY.

CONTENTS

MUSIC: "ARABESQUES."

BY SCHUMANN.

	PAGE.
The Cavalier's Steed	161
Heavily Hit. By Valerie St. James	161
The Birth of the Flower	165
The Wife's Plot. A Record of an Inn	165
The Watcher of the Dead	168
New Romance, "Child of the Sun," by H. Farnie ..	169
"Hand and Glove," by L. H. F. du Terrois	173

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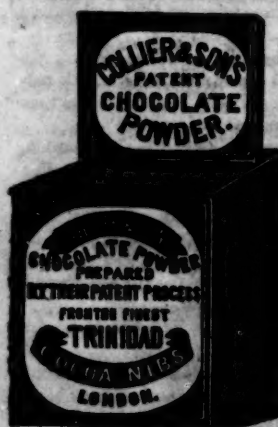
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The Musical Monthly.

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NOVEMBER 1, 1864.

[Right of Translation reserved.]

THE CAVALIER'S STEED.

** In the days of chivalry, when a knight came to cross ways, and knew not which to take, he was wont to throw his bridle on his horse's neck, and let it choose for him.*

I'll throw my rein on my charger's neck,
For whither he goeth my path shall lie,
And which he may travel full little I reck,
The way to love, or the way to die!
Forward, then, forward! my gallant old steed,
The moor it is wide, and the dark shades low'r;
Should'st bear me to death—then fame is my meed,
But carry me rather to lady's bow'r!

II.

I wear no favour upon my crest,
I treasure no love within my heart,
But oh! I'd fain from the red field rest,
And for a space from the fight depart:
I sigh for a love with the fading day,
My heart it beats quicker at ev'ning hour,
At the worst I can level my lance in the fray,
But carry me rather to lady's bow'r!

H. F.

HEAVILY HIT.

By VALERIE ST. JAMES.

CHAPTER I.

THE SECRET OF THE BEECHY CROF.

ONE crisp autumn morning early in the present century, an under-gamekeeper of Squire Braekenbridge was leisurely walking down a glade of pleasant midland county forest, on his way to an outlying shooting. His gun was slung over his shoulder and a pointer ran at his heels. Passing over a rustic bridge, beneath which brawled a clear streamlet over its stony bed, the keeper struck into a footpath which wound along the margin of a sedgy meer, rimmed with willows and alders, and studded with islets of tall rushes.

The variegated forest was still musical with the voice of birds singing their national anthem to God before they broke up their merrie companie. Brilliant wincheats, yellow wagtails, ruddy gorse-linnets, and the larks, flitted and sang across the gamekeeper's path.

Sometimes his dog would make an excursion into the long grass which fringed the side of the walk, and a startled rabbit would hop nimbly into the brushwood beyond.

Ooote and teal sailed on the little lake, out and in the floating sedge, in long holiday lines. It was a jubilant day ere yet the dew was off the grass.

"Hollo!" muttered the keeper to himself, as he came in sight of a picturesque hovel of turf and logs, lit by diamond-paned windows. It nestled under a wooded bank at the head of the meer, and beyond it opened another vista of the forest. "Why, this is summut queer—new for Gilbert, this is. Near se'en o'clock, an' no' a whiff o' smoke fro' the chimney."

The pointer had trotted on before. After smelling at the closed door of the cottage, the dog came back and cowered at his master's heels.

"Heigh! old lass, what's a-do, eh? Hope nowt's gone wrong wi' Gilbert or his ow'd woman," soliloquised the keeper as he walked up to the hovel and tried the door; it was not fastened, and, pushing it open, he entered the cottage. The pointer, shivering in every limb, crouched outside.

"May God ha' massy on us!" cried the man, reeling back with horror from the sight that presented itself to his eyes. "Great Heav'n! if the wood-cutter ain't bin murdered."

On the whitewashed floor lay a middle-aged man in

the dress of an underkeeper. His head was crushed and battered in the most awful manner. By the side of the body, in a pool of dark gore, lay a woodman's hatchet dabbled with blood.

When the gamekeeper had recovered himself a little he examined the body more closely. It was cold. The murder had been done for some time; and, from the retired position of the woodcutter's cot, it was by the merest chance that the deed was discovered when it was. The forester wished to see Gilbert, and had asked the gamekeeper to take a message to him on that morning, otherwise days might have elapsed before the horrible tragedy was found out.

The next circumstance that struck the keeper's attention was the absence of Gilbert Thorne's wife and young son. Were they, too, made away with? At least not in the same awful manner as the father; and with his English heart sickened to the core, the keeper returned to give the alarm and set justice on the murderer's spoor.

The news of Gilbert Thorne's end flew like wild-fire through the country; and the mysterious circumstances connected with it—the unaccountable disappearance of the wife and child—tended to increase the excitement. Every means was employed to track the perpetrators of the deed, but in vain; the bloodhounds of justice were thrown completely off the scent. Nor could any tidings be gained of Mrs. Thorne and her son William, a boy of some ten years. That was the strangest feature in the whole affair. It was known that Gilbert and his wife were strongly attached to each other, and no instance could be recalled by those who knew them of domestic dispeace. No suspicion for a moment fell on his wife. On the other hand, it was equally plain that the murder had not been committed in conjunction with the crime of robbery. What little property there was remained untouched.

In the course of enquiry it came out that an elder son of Thorne's, a lad about twenty-one years of age, had been seen prowling about the neighbourhood a few days previous to the murder. This son, Stephen Thorne, had been a hot-headed, dissipated youth, and after angering his father to the verge of all forbearance, had gone away to sea, as it was always supposed. The villagers said it was a good riddance, and that his decent parents were well quit of him. This had occurred two years before; and his suspicious reappearance, coupled with his fiendish temper and his former quarrel with his father, seemed at least to afford a clue to the mystery. Indeed most people no longer doubted but that Stephen had returned in want to his father's cottage, and that some awful scene of mutual recrimination had taken place, ending in the most diabolical of all murders—parricide.

But even on that supposition the disappearance of Mrs. Thorne and her young son was still unaccounted for. It was not likely that she would voluntarily share the murderer's flight, or, taking her boy William with her, fly from the body of her slain husband. Again speculation was at fault, and time passed away without affording any solution to the difficulty. Warrants were issued; the meer was dragged, the forests tracked; but all in vain—nothing could be discovered.

Several vagrants with no reasonable account of themselves were apprehended in various parts of the country on the suspicion of their being concerned in the Thorne tragedy; but in every case the suspicion was found to be groundless. The Thornes had few or no relatives to grieve for them, and so the tale of blood grew, in the lapse of the years, to be a legend of terror which time itself might never unravel. The old forest grew thinner and thinner; scarcely wood enough was left to shadow a tale of sudden death. The cottage too was swept clean away, and with it the garrulous sur-

mise of the murderer's fate—that strange fate which had never been read. In some sequestered drawer in some hall of justice, the baffled warrant, yellowed by the waiting of thirty years, and unsuspected on its dusty file, lay in grim ambush for him, who by all else was unknown or forgotten.

CHAPTER II.

THE MILL-SPINNER OF RUDDIBOURNE.

Nearly thirty years after the events narrated in the last chapter, Mabel Osyth, the only daughter of Martin Osyth, gardener to Mr. Cantre of Cantre, M.P., stood at the door of her father's neat cottage as the sun went down. Mabel was shading her fine features from the blinding rays, which, though dulled by the late autumn, were still strong enough to dazzle when the sun stood over the horizon's edge. The cottage was bowered amongst stately trees, between which and the white dusty high-road ran a low park wall.

The girl was looking at two figures approaching along the road. As they drew near, slowly and wearily, Mabel saw that one was a very old woman, bent almost double with age over a cross-stick with which she seconded her feeble footsteps. She was dressed in the fashion of a by-gone time, with a high white linen cap, decently confined to the head by a black ribband, and she wore a faded scarlet cloak. Her companion, who wore the dress of a mechanic, was a middle-aged man, going on for fifty perhaps, and bore an expression of gloom on his hard face, telling that his path in life, like the monotonous road he was just then travelling, had been none of the smoothest. He carried a knotted stick over his shoulder, from which dangled his fortunes, comprised in the girth of a red cotton handkerchief.

Mabel went out of the little enclosure of flowers which separated her cottage from the road, and walked up to meet the wayfarers.

"Good evening, mother!" she said, addressing the old woman, whose head shook with the paralytic motion of extreme age—" 'tis a hard journey at your time of life. Will you come in, and rest awhile?"

"Many thanks, mistress," replied her companion, a little gruffly; but perhaps it was his manner after all. "My mother's an ow'd woman now, and canna hear ye speak."

She had certainly betrayed no sign of recognition in answer to Mabel's civility, but keeping her poor old head bent onwards, waited patiently till she should trail faintly over the hard road again.

"We're goin' t' Ruddibourne. Fancy we're no far fro't?" continued the man.

"No, thank goodness, you're not above a mile from the town now," answered Mabel; "you just have to go through the gorge there," pointing to a wooded ravine a little way on, through which the road wound descendingly, "and you will see Ruddibourne below you."

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"Won't you come in and rest, for your mother's sake? Poor old body, she can hardly walk. A cup of milk 'll do her good."

"No, mistress, obliged t'ye; we'll be getting on. I'm a stranger i' Ruddibourne, and want t'get there a-fore it's dark. Come, mother, the way'll soon be enden."

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"Good night, then, and take care of her going down the hill."

This was Mabel's last advice as she walked with them to the wicket of her little garden, and they



toiled onwards towards the shady defile, which led to Buddibourne.

High rocks were piled on both sides, many-coloured inter-laminated beds of shell and sandstone, ironstone and trap. A tiny stream trickled down one of the rocks, and formed a wayside fountain, wreathed with wild flowers and greenery.

The man knelt down, and pushing his cap back from his brow, disclosing by the action a mass of red hair stricken with gray, drank long and deeply of the kindly waters of the rill. Then, unlacing his handkerchief, he produced a tin cup, which he filled and gave to the old woman. She did not speak, but taking the cup in her shaking hand, wet her bloodless lips, and returned it to her son, who tied it up in his bundle, and they resumed their journey down the ravine. At length they reached the opening, and looked down upon the bourne of their travel.

Ruddibourne lay in a narrow valley or glen, through which flowed a river down to the sea, which, half-a-mile below the town, broke upon a white-breasted shore of sand and powdered shells. The sun-light lay like a golden cloud on the red tiled houses and factories which formed the nucleus of the place, and the blue smoke-vapour bathed the crowd of buildings with ineffable softness. On the sloping banks of the dell in which Ruddibourne nestled peeped out villas from amongst clusters of dark trees; here and there a plateau in a bay of the precipitous banks afforded a site for a haughty looking mansion, perched, castle-like, on the brink; whilst in the long hollow below, and above the town, lay masses of factory-buildings, with environs of little cottages for the workmen.

As they slowly descended the hill-path, a carriage with a pair of horses toiled up the declivity past them. Inside was a solitary gentleman reading a newspaper. It was Mr. Venning, the determined and successful cotton spinner, who had just obtained a victory over his Hands in Buddibourne. They had "come out" for a rise, and, after a strike of nine weeks, had agreed to a compromise, which gained them little or nothing, and were again working at his mill. As Mr. Venning drove home, up the hill, he noticed the decrepid old woman, and threw her a penny or two from his carriage. She did not perceive his bounty, but her companion, hesitating a moment, stooped and collected the coppers.

At length they entered Ruddibourne, as it was getting dark. The streets were crowded with operatives, a great part of them women, engaged in the mills and bleach-fields.

After threading a few irregular streets and lanes, the mechanic and his mother paused at the door of a public house with the insignia and title of the "Goat and Cresses." It was apparently a place of frequent call for the working population of the quarter, for an incessant stream of customers passed out and in its swinging doors.

Taking the old woman by the arm, and pushing her gently in before him, the man with the bundle entered the tap of the Goat and Cresses. A miscellaneous crowd, drinking, smoking, talking, swearing, filled the little room with its sawdusted floor. He placed her on a side bench, and going up to the counter, ordered half a pint of beer, on the strength of which he put some questions to the attendant waiter, a peculiar looking individual with a mass of curly black hair and a comical though dissipated face.

"Can yo' tell me, Master, where bides George Heath hereabouts?"

This he asked, having first consulted a fragment of a torn newspaper which he had drawn from his pocket.

"Perbacco! rather. My friend you have come to the right person—you have," answered the waiter. "Not that I keep him here, mon ami. I don't keep him here. For why? George don't come here. But if you want to see him, keep down this street to the left as you get on. *Dien!* you have done that? Then ask anybody, when you come to the end of the street, where Spicer-street is, and No. 18's what you want."

"He's got a deal to do wi' the operatives here, I'm tow'd?" enquired the mechanic, after he had fixed Heath's address in his mind.

"Aye! that he has. *Orambo!* he's a deep fellow, is George. Out of work, eh?"

John, as the waiter was called, had noticed the bundle, which told its own little tale.

"Yes. I'm on the tramp. Thowt as how somethin' might be done here."

"Don't know that," said John, shaking his head. "Bad time for such as you. I never see such a time as has been here for two months. Every blessed person

with two hands givin' up, and won't work. Not if they know it. And the masters in course 'ull see them blowed first. And in the end, after committees has talked themselves out, and the delegates can't get no more tin from the men, they give in, and go on again."

"Weel, Master, this George Heath's had a deal to do wi' the strike?"

"A good deal more than I would," replied John, executing various orders for strong waters with marvellous accuracy. "He's a fine fellow, is George, but it don't pay putting yourself forrard like him."

"So, p'raps, he mayn't be the man t' help me, if he's giv'n offence, like, to th' masters?"

"There you're wrong. Mr. Venning thinks a deal o' George Heath. He's something like himself, not easy frightened. What George says he'll do, by the wax Mary at Homburg bridge, he'll do, and that's the man for Venning. What's your name, friend?"

"Stebbing," muttered the man; "there's been a lock-out i' Manchester, an' I'm tryin' my luck somewheers else."

"What line?"

"I wor in an engine-shop. It's much th' same what I do, if I can do it."

Here Stebbing, having obtained all the information John could give him, paid for his beer, and, rousing up the old dame from the settle, where she had nodded over her stick, unconscious of everything around her, went down the street in search of George Heath.

Enquiring from passengers the proper way, Stebbing and his mother at length arrived at Spicer-street. The house they were in quest of was one of many tall melancholy buildings which formed a kind of barracks for a vast battalion of the great army of industry. George Heath, they were told, lived up the first flight of stairs; and with great difficulty Stebbing got his mother to climb the arduous ascent. At length it was accomplished, and he rapped at a plain unpainted fir door.

"Come in!" was uttered in a deep masculine voice, and Stebbing accordingly opened the door; and, taking his mother by the arm, entered the apartment. It was a bare looking room, unpapered, with a rude pallet in one corner, and a hectic fire spot on the white hearth. Heath was sitting by the fire, in order that he might have the aid of its unsteady light in reading a book. He rose as they entered, and laid his book on a rude table. Compared with Stebbing, he was a noble, an aristocrat, of labour; over his intelligent face and serious brow ran the fine traces of deep thought, and his eyes, even in the flicker of the feeble light, burned with the gleam of the mind which informed the face.

Stebbing muttered some commonplace of greeting the while the foot-sore old mother nodded wearily over her stick, looking vacantly with her dim eyes at the fire on the hearth. George Heath's first care was the poor creature's comfort.

"Why, comrade, is this old woman your mother? She is! Poor old mother, come here and sit down by the fire."

He had taken her so tenderly in his strong arm, and almost carried her to the chair by the hearth, which he had just quitted.

"There, mother, now you must have some tea. What'll she take, comrade?"

"Oh, you needn't trouble yourselves about her. She's an ow'd ooman."

"More's the reason to look after her. Have you come far to-day?"

"About five mile. She canna go more i' th' now. I ha' comed," continued Stebbing, who thought he might as well declare his errand at once, "t' see if yo could gie me onny help t' get some work i' Buddibourne."

"Stay a minnte, and then we'll talk about that," cried George, who had been busily examining the contents of a small cupboard which protruded from the wall like a niche for a saint. He produced some common tea things, bread and butter, and then, hastily smatching up his cap, went out of the room, saying he would be back in a minute. Scarcely had that nominal limit of time passed away before Heath reappeared, bearing a little mug with milk in it. Then, arraying his hospitable board (what though the fare was not my lord and lady's munificence), he placed a blackened tin-kettle on the fire.

"There," he said, as he completed the arrangements for the tea, "we'll be able to give the old lady a comfortable cup, and, mayhap, you'll have one yourself."

Stebbing thanked him, but mentioned he had just swallowed some beer at the tavern. Heath's brows

lowered a little at this information, and he said, somewhat sternly—

"I hope, comrade, you're free from the vice of drinking. Not that I object to moderate enjoyment, but the man that is a drunkard I scorn,—he's no friend o' mine, that's given to liquor."

The tramp winced a little under George's words, but made some little signs of disclaimer.

"Enough, enough," replied George, interrupting him; "but I have seen so much o' the misery of our men, ay, and women, rise from drinking, that I can't abear it. She doesn't seem to be taking any notice of where she is," he continued, looking at Stebbing's mother with the dim eyes and the helpless bend of the head. "Poor old woman! For her sake, I'll speak to Mr. Venning myself about you."

The ancient mother partook of the refreshment offered her, in the old disregardful manner, and when her son said to her, "Come mother, we mun begoin'," she arose and followed him feebly but implicitly. George directed them to decent lodgings for the night, and told Stebbing to call at the mill next morning.

CHAPTER III.

THE SONG OF THE RIDER.

Mr. Noel Venning, the large and substantial cotton-spinner at Buddibourne, was a man of mark. He pointed many morals and adorned many tales. He was much cited for the encouragement of, and as a bright example to, unambitious and tardy youth. For Mr. Venning, rich man as he was reputed on 'Change, had, not so very many years before, entered Buddibourne as lowly as Stebbing on the dusty afternoon when the spinner threw him some charity. Perhaps—who knows?—he may have recalled his own entrance thirty years before, when, a little bare-footed urchin, he had shivered a way into the pity and employment of a handloom weaver. From that small beginning he had worked on and on and on—no sorcery at work for him in the laboratory of fortune—till the night broke, and brilliant day struck on the broad brow and firm feature of Noel Venning.

Yet had he and his good example been the bane instead of the antidote, when applied by way of instruction to young men journeying into life. God help poor human nature, with its creeds of facts and fallacies! "Go and do likewise" is a precept, obedience to which is not always attested by the presence of success. A vagrant adventures in the desert, traces his perilous way, bravely as skilfully, reaches the golden shore beyond: another follows, his soul bounding with the victory he knows to be possible, as brave, mark you, as worthy of the *Diva Fortuna*, as he who went before. But the sands of circumstance have shifted, and his feet may not travel the same path with the first adventurer; so this vagrant perishes, with not even the bright land in view over the quivering horizon.

Mr. Venning, towards the close of the next day, was busily engaged scrutinizing ledgers, &c., in his office at the mill, which was situated in the heart of Buddibourne. The mill was a large plain square of freestone, with a whole multiplication table of windows growing over its front in regular rows, which, if added up and quadrupled, would only have given an approximation to the number of hands—principally women—tolling within. Mr. Venning was a constant attendant on the business of his mill. This assiduity was only of a piece with his unflinching character. For the man who was paraded from front to rear of exhortations to progress—who was the Excelsior chanted victoriously to the sedgy masses stagnating in the world's stream—who was launched illustratively at the hands of procrastinating and careless youth—this representative man required to endorse the world's good opinion of his character, by keeping it indissolubly connected with the prosperous mill which had spun out his fortune in golden web.

From his business reverie he was startled by a tap at the door.

"Enter," he said mechanically; and George Heath appeared, cap in hand, followed by Stebbing, clotted and dirty and haggard. It was a strangely dissonant trio.

"I think I have seen you somewhere before," said Mr. Venning, scrutinizing the mechanic who was applying to him for some work, backed by the word, occasionally thrown in, of George Heath. "I think I must have seen you before. Yes; I recollect now." Mr. Venning was a man who did not like to forget anything, however trivial. "I passed you last night on the hill. An old woman with you. Mother, eh?"

"Yes, Sir, it's my mother. An ow'd ooman now, an' no able t' do onnything fur herself."

This might have been said with the view of awakening a little beneficial sympathy; if so it failed, for Venning, with a practical thought, which was characteristic of the man, turned to Heath:

"You say there's a fireman needed,—Gabblesby's not come back?"

"Yes, Sir: there's a berth open—not filled up yet. This man tells me he's been in an engine shop, and of course that will qualify for the job."

Stebbing corroborated this statement, and eventually the cotton-spinner engaged him; and, with a warning, half intended for Heath's edification, against leaguening with ill-advised associations of operatives, of which Mr. Venning observed there were enough and to spare, he dismissed them from his office.

Towards the fall of the day, Mr. Venning prepared to go home. His preparations consisted in the main of a conscientious investigation of his premises, from the top, yea to the basement thereof. No material atmosphere, hazy with the floating particles of stuff, nor crashing of machinery whirling the mind into a maelstrom of infernal noise, could deter the millowner from his daily duty. Having in this manner completed the circuit of the large building, Venning finally arrived at the engine-room, where a polished giant in steel dashed up and down his powerful arms, sending life and movement through thousands of subtle automata. Descending from the engine-room to the regions of heat below, he next glanced at the boilers, with their under fires.

Stebbing had gone on duty that very day. At the moment of his employer's visit he was sitting on a block of wood gazing steadily at the bright red light striking downward from the furnaces. The lurid glare fell with strange effect on the man's peculiar face. So strangely, indeed, that Venning impelled by an influence he could not understand, gazed fixedly on his new hand. And as he gazed, wild fancies trooped through his brain—subtle, fine spirits, that evaded the grasp of the judgment.

Stebbing—Manchester—look out: Stebbing—Manchester—look out. The words were beaten into his thoughts by the steel giant overhead. That was all he knew of the man's history, and yet the millowner felt in his soul that Stebbing was no stranger to him. It was impossible, at all events, that their history could have anything in common, beyond, perhaps, some chance collision or acquaintance, such as occur in profusion during a working-man's life.

With this theory to account for his interest in Stebbing, (sitting, all unconscious of scrutiny, in the red light), Venning entered his carriage and drove homewards. Not reading the papers, though, on that evening, but brooding, as one who has started a doubt he cannot run down. But he unleashed the strong powers of his mind, and sent them straining backwards on the trail of life; through muttering towns of labour,—wild homes of poverty—bed and table under a hedge—alonghs of despond—yea, back to pleasant lands of osier-fen, stream, and wildwood;—it will go hard but that they will at last run in upon their quarry.

In the sweet evening Mr. Venning sat alone in the drawing-room of his old house, which lurked in a wood a mile or two from town. Quaint it was—with crotchet gables and little flights of steps leading into the chimneys at one end, and dragon-shaped spouts at the other; with its inexorable hedgerows clipped into solid walls along the terraced walks; with its carved sun-dial, on which the tell-tale light seldom perched except by the frigid permission of the leafless winter trees.

The deep bay-window was open on the lawn. Over the trees the western heaven was gay with colour as a herald's tabard, splended with purple and gold. Mrs. Venning paced the terrace outside, with uncovered head, and clad slightly in a white muslin dress.

"Oh! God, Father of lights, what an exquisite evening is this!" said Mrs. Venning, half to herself, half to her husband, as he sat in the window recess.

"Most beautiful, surely," answered the mill owner, abstractedly, "if the sunset fall upon happy souls."

"Yes, Noel, but such a night brings healing on its wings. A twilight has all the beautiful influence of night without its gloom, and weary must the spirit be that cannot rejoice in natural loveliness like this."

"But you must take care of yourself, Clara," said her husband, gently; "'tis getting chilly—had you not better come in now?—you are so thinly clad, love."

Mrs. Venning was a fragile creature. Her face was delicately beautiful and regular as the Grecian mould, and her jet black hair was simply dressed in the Madonna style. She might be about eight and twenty,

"Nay then!" she replied "an autumn shiver is nothing, so that it be laid on the shrine of such loveliness as this. You can fetch me a shawl though. You will find one on the lounge next you. Thanks! now for another solitary walk on the terrace."

He did not accompany her, but rested again in his chair—leaning his heavy head in his hands, and looking fixedly into the deepening gloom. Ever and again his wife crossed the window in her white dress, as Leila in her bridal attire might look for her phantom lover among the gold cliffs of Anzascas. The gorgeous procession of the sun had entered the gates of night, and the portcullis of darkness was settling down. Mrs. Venning entered the room and said,

"Do you care to hear me sing to you now?"

"Darling, you know I do," answered her husband, rising up, and closing the open window, "it is one of my greatest pleasures to hear that voice of yours. Shall I ring for lights?"

Mrs. Venning had by this time laid aside her shawl and was opening the piano.

"No, dear, thanks! on the contrary 'twas the deepening night that made me think of the ballad I wish to sing to you. Oh, it is the weirdest creation—the wildest of Mendelssohn's thoughts!"

"Have I heard it yet?"

"I think not—No, I only got it the other day, and have not been sufficiently initiated into its mysteries to sing it before."

"And it is called—?"

"The Reuter."

"You must translate; you know, Clara, I am a dreadful Kaffir in tongues."

He came behind her as she sat on the piano-stool, turning over a portfolio of loose music. It was getting very dark and she could scarcely read the titles.

"I cannot find it," Mrs. Venning said at length, putting down the portfolio; "but it does not matter. Such notes as that Hebrew wrote haunt me like a happiness or a terror, and the Reuter has sunk deep in my memory already. But you will lose all the dramatic effect of the semi-light, if you remain so near me. I wish you to go to your old rest at the window and look out on the dark trees."

"Very well, Clara, though I'd rather sit by the minstrel whilst she sang."

"But that would not do at all! You would rob the minstrel of half her spell. Listen, whilst I tell you the thought that is woven through the song."

He had again settled down in his old attitude in the deep window, and was gazing at the spectral trees barred across the deep red horizon. Mrs. Venning commenced the symphony as she said—

"Listen! these fluttering notes—they mean the brown leaves of autumn falling in the last glint of the sun. It is a lone old forest. The wind stirs the creaking boughs of the wood. And a horseman rides solitary down the glade. Try and imagine out the scene whilst I sing."

And she struck with impassioned voice into the words of the first verse.

Venning sat thinking as she sang, imagining out such a scene; and to his fancy the terraced lawn and belting trees of his grounds were changed.

It was a forest he saw—a lone autumn forest. The wind moaned through the trees, and the red foliage came fluttering down. No horseman there, but a little boy in coarse clothing dragging his nutting spoils on a branch of pine, his shadow prolonged by the level sun back into the dim wood.

Mrs. Venning finished the first verse, and again the dreary flutter of the leaves trembled down the notes.

"The horseman," she said, "falls into a reverie under the strange influence of the scene, and imagines himself at his journey's end. His rapid fancy wings him to his lady-love's home. The dogs bark, he mounts the turret stair, gains the tapestried bower, and flings himself into his mistress' arms."

Again her passionate notes rang out the story of the horseman's dream.

But Mr. Venning, sitting sole in the bay window with a frontage of ghostly trees, saw still the boy in the forest. Trailing his wood-spoils over the crackling leaves, he, too, is borne on the wings of fancy home. With a child's gay thought he pictures the bright fire in the cottage, his mother's caress, and his father's smile. At last, in truth, he reaches the woodcutter's hut. The dogs bark; and, with the wayward whim of a child, the little boy climbs to the window through which sparkles the fitful ruddiness of the blazing fagots. The gleam lights up a face of childish agony—

Another moment and the little fellow is running as fast as his tiny feet will succour, away, away, away, down the glade, a mere mote against the lurid sun, till it sinks below the horizon of wandering forest.

Again the dreary flutter of the autumn leaves trembled down the notes of the Piano.

"Now," said Mrs. Venning, "the leaves fall thicker and thicker, faster and faster around the solitary horseman. A spirit, shrieking in the hollow tempest that begins to moan thro' the forest, calls deridingly to the foolish dreamer, 'awake!' And he spurs onward and onward, amidst the dash of the whirling forest."

And with a voice of exquisite tenderness she sang the last verse of the Reuter.

Her husband did not move when she had finished, but sat with his head borne in his hands. She arose, and went to him, and tenderly placed her arm round his neck, drawing him against her bosom.

"Why Noel," she said, "the Reuter seems to have struck you deeply. I am glad of it. Is it not a noble song?"

Venning looked up at her calm face, faintly seen in the unsteady light.

"But—but, it was only a dream?"

"Yes, love, only a dream of the Reuter, beguiled by the spell of the night, and thoughts of his waiting fair."

"Then—then, there was no blood on the floor," (he spoke hurriedly), "no dabbled grey hair—no maniac woman kneeling by the cloven head?"

"No, love, you have had a more sombre idea in your fancy than even I wished."

"Oh! I remember now," exclaimed her husband, springing up, with a forced attempt at cheerfulness, "but really Clara, that Mendelssohn shall be tabooed from our musical evenings if he is to terrify stupid fellows like me in this way. Now for my little girl—to kiss her before she goes to bed."

CHAPTER IV.

GABRIEL LEVIES BLACK MAIL.

As the Tolbooth or prison-house of old Edinburgh used to be called the Heart of Mid-Lothian, so Jorker's Rents might have been appropriately termed the Heart of Buddibourne. And a very unhealthy vital centre it was. Jorker's Rents consisted of a square court of high melancholy houses staring into each other's windows with a dreary look of decayed fraternity. A few poles, stuck out from upper windows, were ornamented with petticoats and men's garments which had undergone ablution. Through the centre of the earth-laid court ran an open stream or canal, which, emerging from under the houses at one end, disappeared in similar fashion at the other. This was a notable stream for malaria and noisome vapours, and came down hot from the mills. To a fanciful view, it ran down like the sweat of the hard-worked engines, which laboured so lustily all the day long—and part of the night too.

The miasmatic steam ascended insidiously into the nostrils of the inhabitants, more especially of an infinity of young Arabs, who tumbled about on the fascinating brink of the water. At all periods of the juvenile life, and at all hours of the day, children were to be seen on the dangerous edge; yet, such is a poor man's luck, no parent in Jorker's Rents ever had to deplore the catastrophe of a parboiled or drowned child. The prevailing hue of these young Bedouins was much the same as that of their desert kinsmen—a tawny brown, with a variation to black. Perhaps their natural guardians considered a constant sojourn adjacent to the means of purification enough of itself; but certain it is, that the ordeal of washing was seldom undergone by the children of Jorker's Rents.

As the sun went down, and Jorker's Rents were shrouded in deep shades, unrelieved by gas-light, Gabriel Tye, who inhabited a section of No. 20, was deeply engaged in literary pursuits. It was literature under difficulties, too, for Gabriel wrote with a pen of anomalous appearance, as it were a feather of some strange bird not generally recognised in quill manufacture.

This pen was spluttering, under Gabriel's manipulation, over a sheet of note paper, and the whole operation was illuminated by a farthing candle, stuck in convivial pleasantry of aspect into an empty beer bottle.

The look of the room was not a comfortable one, partaking of the meagre reputation of a literary den, as to its bare walls, scant furniture, and untidy appearance.

Gabriel Tye had not been intended originally for the profession of letters, and indeed had only relinquished

for a very few years back his standard occupation of bricklayer. Gabriel would have earned the praise and double the encouragement too of those Mass-Reformers who, holding that labour, like capital, may be diverted into various channels of profit, are strong for the working man having two or more strings to his bow.

After a few lock-outs, and a forfeiture of much bodily comfort thereby, Gabriel recollected in a bright moment that he could write! This magical discovery, and a certain ingenuity of mind, prompted Mr. Tye to forswear the hod and trowel, and take to writing for the press. It may be objected, that Gabriel's occupation and inexperience were likely to prove insurmountable barriers in a profession requiring both practice and study. But there are many phases of literary life, and one of these fell, most aptly and conveniently, to be illustrated by the ex-bricklayer.

Mr. Gabriel Tye's production, amended as to the spelling, and perhaps a little touched up so as to dovetail grammatically, enjoyed an extensive circulation in provincial newspapers, generally amongst the advertisements, and in close conjunction with the puffing announcement of some quack doctors, who had discovered a panacea. One of these effusions Gabriel was engaged upon, or rather he was penning a prospectus of his capabilities and terms, so as to enlist the sympathies of a certain London physician, who had just struck root into the provincial press.

"I think that ought to do," soliloquized Gabriel, examining, with a certain educational pride, the following document, written as here set down:—

"Hon. Sir,—As I see you ave afterdavit at the end of your Bil, I shall be ridy to searve you as chep as anybody in London can. I ave bin imploid by a grate many doctors for to searve for him and I will sware wat you please which you must kip it a sicritt. I am very thin in the bodey and lok siecly so as how the Gustusses here will beleave I ave bin ceured. I will alsoe draw up the afterdavit if you ples for I knows the way ow, also most of the turns and words. My price for Kanser is five shillings, and the same for the Fool-dizzies and Kins-evil. Alsoe my wife will swear which she is very dissollut and good fur dropseye. Five shillin.

Hond. Sir,

Your obedt. cervant,
Gabriel Tye,
at 20 Jorker's Rents Redbourne.

When he had finished this epistle, Gabriel proceeded to enclose it in an envelope, which he addressed from a ruffianly newspaper which lay on the table beside him. This done, he cried out,

"Hey! Madge—Madge, I say, get up!"

It was difficult to tell who was addressed, for, to all appearance, Tye was the only person in the room. But his words did not fall to the ground ineffectual; there was a Madge, and Madge heard her liege-lord's voice. This model wife was represented by a bundle of faded red with a dun shawl in it, placed upon a miserable bed in the far corner of the room, scarcely revealed by the feeble day-light.

"Get up, you drunken ould beast you—Madge, I say, get up if yer don't want short measures took."

Gabriel's wife made a slight roll of recognition, bringing a patch of face—inflamed, blotched face—into my range of view. Her lord and master waited a few moments to see whether she was going to rise or not, when, the bundle having fallen into its quiescent state, he suddenly rushed at it in a frantic way, not commensurate with a philosophic or literary disposition, and rolled it on the dirty uneven floor. The effect was electrical, for the next minute Mrs. Tye stood up, haggard, and dirty, and abusive, and consecrated her husband to the wrath of the Fiend, as is the practice with the impotently wicked. As for Gabriel, he stood the attack, being merely a verbal assault, with admirable good nature, affixing a wafer in the meantime to his MS.

"See here," he said to his spouse, "Take this to the post."

Mrs. Tye replied she would see him in a state of bale first. This rather unchristian spirit was punished, in the flesh, by her husband taking her by the neck and shaking her soundly—a course of treatment no doubt good for those "dissollut" and afflicted "dropseye."

"Now then, you'll take it, won't you, eh?"

"Wot is't?" enquired Mrs. Tye, in a husky voice. She wished to give in gradually, as the fashion is with vanquished womankind.

"Never you mind."

"I will mind. Is it palsy or the Kinzevil?"

"Five shillin' a piece. Afterdavit. Take 'em off. I'm going out."

"Where?"

"To see Prentis."

Mrs. Tye, with a hollow grumble, shuffled to the door, bearing the letter in her hand. Her husband bestowed on her a parting piece of excellent advice—

"Mind you come home again. Don't let me a-catch you out when I come in; that's all."

Great pity merely (to reflect on the whole philosophy of husband, wife, and home) that Mr. Tye had not urged such domestic views on his spouse sooner. He put on a very tattered hat, and, closing his door behind him, crossed round the court, and ascended a dark and not very safe stairway, which led to his friend's dwelling. Sounds of industry still beat from the room, in healthy pulsation, as he knocked at the door.

"Come in!" was sung out quite cheerily as the tapping noise ceased for a moment, and Gabriel advanced into a cosy little apartment, bright with a blazing fire, and neat as care could make it. A little old man, with red cowl and spectacle-ridden nose, was hammering away at a shoe, and the scraps of leather and tools laying about proclaimed him at once as a cobbler. In the chimney corner, knitting stockings (that pleasant and appropriate occupation of old age) sat a tidily dressed dame, wearing, like the cobbler, a pair of silver-rimmed spectacles over her nose. The only other occupant of the room, excepting a sleek cat slumbering and dreaming on the white hearth-stone, was a young woman, who was engaged in drowsily humming a child in her bosom to sleep. She was rather pretty, but wore over her natural good looks that hideous mask of sullen or rather melancholy expression which too often mars the features of the poor. As Gabriel entered, the young woman started with a perceptible shudder, and clasped her child more closely to her breast.

"You're workin' pretty late to night, Tom," said their visitor, seating himself in a chair near the fire.

"This is a fine evening," he continued, to the old dame, who assented to his observation, and plied her task more busily, if possible, than ever.

"Pretty late!" said Tom, heartily, pushing his spectacles upwards on his brow, and leaning on one elbow, which again was supported on his knee, "why it's not nine yet. Ah, Gabriel, it would ha' been telling you, if you had worked a little harder too. Susan would'n't be here to-night."

He looked with a look of pity on the young woman, who was silently and unheedingly hushing her baby to sleep.

"Not," he continued, "that I grudge Susan's home."

"No, no," cried the old dame from her warm nest in the chimney corner, "that we don't. Poor Susan, she's a comfort to us. We couldna' want her now."

"Ay, she's a good girl—Susan, a fine girl," assented Gabriel. "I allus had a great liking—"

"Stop that! I can't sit here and hear you speak that way," all of a sudden cried the young woman, angrily looking in Gabriel's face. "I know what you speak that way for."

"Susan, Susan—never mind," said the cobbler, crossing the floor, and betraying the existence of a wooden leg in the process. He took her tenderly round the neck.

"But I will mind. Don't I know why he's here to-night?"

"In course you do," said Tye, not a whit disconcerted. "Any affectionate daughter would. I'm here to see you, Susan, my dear child."

He looked at her with the expression that might be adopted by a cobra di capella towards a bird, or by a spider when inviting a fly into its parlour.

"Dear child! I was a very dear child to you, wasn't I?" Susan Tye spoke bitterly, and the falling tears dabbled her child's face.

"Susan, my dear Susan, hush!" cried the cobbler; "mind, he's your father."

"Ay, Susan," said the old woman, "forgive them that trespass against you."

"Well, I never! What's a-goin' to be said next?" Mr. Tye had gone into a mild fit of surprise. "What's she got to forgive, eh?"

"I will tell you —"

"Hold on a bit," interrupted her father, checking his daughter with parental authority; "I've got a good deal to forgive, if you haven't. When I looks around me—Mr. Tye surveyed first the roof, then the walls, and lastly the chair in which he sat—"I sees a comf'able home—"

"Which I never had," ejaculated Susan, again rocking her child, fretful from the clamour, into its sleep.

"You hadn't, eh? Well you aint an ongrateful daughter; oh no! Never mind. When I looks around this comf'able home, I sez, what is the reason, I sez, why I don't have a comf'able home likewise?"

Gabriel paused a moment for effect's sake, an opportunity which his daughter seized.

"Because you and mother were always a-drinking and fighting, you were."

"Oh! Susan. don't go on so. Let him be. We know him," cried the old cobbler, entreatingly. "Come Gabriel, don't go on arguing any more wi' her. She's gone through a deal, poor girl."

"I don't want for to argue, Tom," said Gabriel, quite composedly—your literary men have their ideas all so pat—"I don't want to aggravate no one. All I want to know is, why I haven't got a comf'able home? And I sez, it's all along, I sez, of Susan a-packing up and leaving her parents in their old age."

At this climax, Mr. Tye produced from his pocket a yellow handkerchief of uncertain fabric, on which was depicted the Champion of England in a smashing attitude, waiting for somebody to come on and get smashed. Applying the legs of the champion to his nose, Mr. Tye indulged in a rhetorical flourish of that organ, and looked lack-a-daisically at the cat. Susan was about to speak, when old Tom said—

"Hush! Susan, let me speak to him. You know, Gabriel, you're not saying the whole truth."

"No I aint. I know I'm not. I'd a'most forgot that blessed baby there."

He pointed at the child, hugged more tightly to Susan's bosom. The young woman's tears were again flowing, but this time she made no effort to speak.

"God forgive you, Gabriel Tye, for that word," cried the old dame, shaking her head. "I b'lieve you and your missus drove the poor gal to it."

"They did, they did!" Susan almost screamed in her eagerness to veil her sin. "They badgered me, and they beat me. Mother's always drunk. Sometimes not a thing to eat in the house, and the clothes in the pawn. I was drove to it, as God is my witness. My darling, hush-h-h—my darling."

Susan's child had wakened up, and she was all the bountiful, loving mother again, leaning over its weakness like a heaven. Her father sat silent, waiting till old Tom should continue his interrupted speech, which he speedily did.

"Gabriel, this is not honourable. I'm an old soldier, and wouldn't say one thing and do another. No more should you, Gabriel. You know how Susan happened to come here first of all. The poor thing had been led off her feet, and you treated her bad after you'd found it out."

"And no wonder," muttered Tye. As if there was no sin or crime in the world save love gone astray!

"Well, well, neighbour, don't let us be judges. I fancy we've all summat to answer for when the muster-roll's called. Susan comed here, and begged of me to help her, and she said—well, I won't go over that."

"I said," broke in Susan, half fiercely, half affectionately, in turns, as she looked from her father to the old cobbler, "I said I would die from their cruelty if you didn't take me in. I said I would sooner fling myself from the bridge than go home again. And you were kind to me—oh, may God remember you for it!—and took me in."

"And you've been a blessing to us since, Susan. We've had our reward over an' over again. But, Gabriel, after the child was born, and Susan was able in the course o' time to go back to her work at the mill, you came to me and complained of her a-going away."

"Yes, yes, I recollect that."

"Well, she wouldn't go back to you, and we were well content to keep her, poor girl, and her child. But you said that her wages ought for to be spent in your house, and not in mine."

Gabriel nodded that such was his view, and, in imagination, apportioned out Susan's earnings in diurnal potations otherwise unattainable.

"I told you I didn't want to keep a penny of Susan's wages, but I thought it ought all to go for the child. So, when you said that that wouldn't do, and that you would have her back, I offered to pay you twelve shillings a-month to let her be."

"Ay, but he didn't remember all the expense and burthen I was to you when my baby was born," cried Susan, who had shown many insurgent feelings in the workings of her unhappy face; "all he wanted was the money to buy drink with. And he knew very well that all I could make at the mill would never pay for what I cost you."

"Tut, tut—Susan, don't say so," said the cobbler. "Cost us! deary me, it's never missed. But I'm going off my story. I said, Gabriel, that I'd give you twelve shillings a-month,—now haven't I kept my word?"

"As yet, I must say as how you have."

"Ay! and always will, so long as I can rap shoe-leather on my knee." Tom resumed his shoe, and began to hammer it as he spoke. "But, neighbour, what I say is, don't forget what you promised me—not to speak hard to your own daughter, and to leave her quietly with us."

"Well, who's speakin' hard to her? You needn't let out on me that way. I only came up to see you friendly-ways, and wished as how I had as comfortable house as you."

This explanation was rather a quibble on Mr. Tye's part, inasmuch as his real object in visiting the old cobbler was to see if he could raise a few shillings by pretending a tremendous and renovated paternal affection for Susan. Poor Susan! what a sad little history was hers; not so uncommon, though, in the annals of humble life. From her childhood everything was against her prospects of happiness. Her parents were given to drink, and where that is the case, how can a home ever be happy? Without religious principle as a stay and a guide, without the reciprocal affection of a mother and a child, abused and maltreated on all hands, the girl had in the end—the dreadful end of all this—gone forth to moral suicide—that awful fate which is not a whit less reckless action than self murder. Doubtless that crime too would have followed in due course, by which the frantic soul seeks to expiate a life—the extreme yet unavailing penance of despair—had not the old cobbler stepped in to the rescue. Old Tom had been a Peninsular hero, and had left behind him a leg to help in fertilizing the vineyards of Spain. His discharge was accompanied by a shadowy pension, not enough in the humblest of humble lives, to support himself and his wife. But Tom was nothing daunted, and in the hour of need resumed his awl and his last, which when a boy he had left, to don the knot of ribbons and wear the livery of his king. The long years of battle, murder, and sudden death, were but, so to say, a dreary episode apart from the main purpose of Tom's life, and he resumed his cobbling as blithely as if returned from a lengthened holiday—none of the pleasantest. So Tom cobbled and patched his neighbours' highlows with great assiduity, that he might honestly work out his life without recourse to the indignities of charity.

When Susan came to him, wan and despairing, Tom received the wretched young woman as a father his long-lost child. Not a doubt did he suggest, nor difficulty raise—Tom's benevolence knew no such stint; his welcome was that of a Christian who trusts in God that He will help, in His good pleasure, the feeble hands of the merciful. Poor Susan found peace, such as she had never experienced before, in her new home, and both Tom and his wife, whilst they took heed to the body, tried likewise to heal the mind of the neglected girl. This was no easy matter. As an heir, coming into a property which has been spell-bound in Chancery like the tangled bower of the Sleeping Beauty, finds it thick with weeds and impurity, so Tom, on acquiring Susan, found her fair woman's soul gross with error. It was long before the light of the Gospel could be got to struggle through the darkened windows of her understanding. Forgiveness was the sublime truth of all others most to be taught; and what so difficult as to forgive a mortal wrong? And even after Susan was beginning to soften under the continued instruction of the kind old couple—when she began to see her sin—and the circumstances of her past life—in their true colours—her father again stepped in to mar her chance of happiness.

It was pitiful to think that this man, Gabriel Tye—to a certain extent educated, with all his bodily faculties fitting him to earn his bread honestly, and, above all, possessing the consciousness of having well-nigh ruined his daughter body and soul—should follow her with the evil pertinacity of a bloodhound running its victim down. So mean it was, too, of a man to ask tribute, black mail, rather in the old Border usage, of this old, industrious cobbler, to whom, under God, Susan's life in both worlds was owing. But he did so; and early and late old Tom hammered at his last, saying to himself, "He shan't have the girl. I'll save her. I'll save her."

As for Susan, she worked cheerfully at her old labour

in Venning's Mill, and would have been comparatively happy, had it not been the sad feeling that, through her father, she was a burthen on her kind protectors. At times she could have thrown herself on the reprobate's neck, and wept out her natural affection; aye, she could have gone, when the mood was on her, and clasped the faded red dress of her dirty, drunken mother, saying "Let me be your daughter again." All this might have been, and the glow of comfort might have again lit up the forsaken home; but Gabriel could feel no answering affection, and Susan's heart would get hard once more.

In the meantime, old Tom had got up from his wooden block, and, opening an important-looking military chest with iron bands and hasp, plunged his head in search of something in its vast recesses. Susan sighed deeply, and looked more and more dejected. Her father looked as innocent as he was in the custom of appearing on the occasion of swearing an "affidavit" before a "Justus."

"I don't think it's there, Tom," said Mrs. Prentis, after the old soldier had burrowed for a considerable time in the chest. "Look if it's not in the red bowl on the shelf."

"Aye! I dare say it is," replied her husband, withdrawing his head from the chest, in an apoplectic flush, "I forgot where it was put last."

Tom took down from a neat line of variegated crockery which adorned a shelf on the wall a brilliantly imagined bowl, representing a scarlet shepherd playing a flute of a similar hue to a vagrant flock of blue sheep. This bowl was evidently a place of refuge for any stray article about Tom's establishment which could be contained in its depths. A preference, perhaps, was shown to stray buttons, of which Tom poured out a few odd dozen on the table, not two of them being alike. Twine, nails, bits of leather, old battered thimbles, spectacle-cases *sans* inmates, made up the contents of the red bowl, and from amongst them Tom picked out a small leathern case. The whole operation was not unlike the practice of a Parisian *chiffonier*.

"Here we are at last!" cried Tom, as he extracted the leather case, and undid the string which was carefully knotted round it. He then took out six shillings, nearly its whole contents, and shoved them over the table to Gabriel Tye.

"You know, Gabriel," he continued, "the month's not due till the week after next, but you can have that 'till the now."

"And can you take it," said Susan, as her father greedily snatched up the pieces; "oh! what a father you are to go robbing us that way."

"Take it! of course I can. Is that a good shilling?"—ringing it on the table—"I'll chance it. Now I must be off, to look after my old 'oman."

He shuffled on his hat, and looked round a little awkwardly, for even he felt his degraded nature at the moment.

"We're going to read a chapter of the Bible, neighbour, and we'll be glad if you'll stay."

"No, thank'ee. Good night, Tom. 'Night, Mrs. Prentis, and you, Susan."

The girl scarcely looked at him as he went out at the door.

"We are all miserable sinners," said old Mrs. Prentis, still knitting in the chimney corner. "We have erred and strayed from His way like lost sheep. There is no health in us."

Tom was putting away his tools for the night, preparing for the peaceful hour of family communion, most beautiful and most pleasant of the live-long day. Susan—who would have thought that hardened creature (to speak from her life) had so many tears left her?—was crying afresh. A lost sheep, erred and strayed from His way.

When Mrs. Prentis had ceased from the words of the Confession, Susan continued, half aloud, half to herself, bending over her child,

"Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore thou them that are penitent."

"Yes, He will spare them, Susan, and He will restore. Trust in him." Thus said Tom, opening his big-printed Bible.

As for Gabriel, he was getting rapidly drunk at the bar of the Goat and Cresces. His wife had returned to her wretched home, in awe against her lord's expected return, which was in the delirious rage of intoxication.

(To be continued.)

THE BIRTH OF THE FLOWER.

I.

The work was done; the Sixth Day past,
And Earth was very fair:
The blushes of the sunset dwelt
Upon the virgin air.
A new life sparkled in the wave,
And murmur'd in the wood;
And He, the Worker, saw his deed
And knew that all was good.

II.

And God said, "Meet 'tis, ere I pause
And bless the morrow's sun,
I set my seal upon the world
To show the work is done."
He said and laid a holy hand
Upon the happy sod;
And where He toucht, a Flower arose:
It was the Seal of God.

THE WIFE'S PLOT.

A RECORD OF AN INN.

ABOUT twenty or five-and-twenty miles south of Berlin stands a small village called Holzapfel. It has grown but little this century or two: the old gable ends and the church weathervane and the immemorial limes have stood there for generations; and the Holzapfel of to-day is not much different to the Holzapfel of 1664. But at one time, and before the rail joined Berlin to Düsseldorf, and skimmed the Rhine to the far south, Holzapfel stood on the postal highway and held no mean position. You changed horses there for the first time, after leaving Berlin—say for Leipzig; and there the tumbril-like conveyance, which was dignified by the name of Haste-carriage, or in German *Eilwagen* (*lucus a non*), but which resembled nothing so much as a large tea chest on indifferent axles, put up at the door of Herr Jakob Krauss who kept the Gasthof zum Alten Fritz, or as we should say the Old Fred Inn. "Old Fred," be it known, was no less a personage than Frederick II., King of Prussia, according to English nomenclature; Frédéric, according to his own spelling; and Friedrich, according to Mr. Carlyle. Be his name what it may, he was at the time of our story the greatest man and the most feared man in Europe. Europe rang with his name; Prussia adored him. He was "Old Fred" or "Father Fred" in the mouth of his people, who mingled their familiarity with awe. He had fought battles—how many, goodness and Carlyle only know; and he had won some seventy-nine or eighty per cent. of them; that of Prague had just been won, long before Prague was a household word on the music stool of desperate young pianistes. And at this stage of European affairs, Herr Jakob Krauss stood at the door of the Old Fred Inn at Holzapfel.

He was no stolid phlegmatic German, the good Jakob; he was the liveliest, merriest, roundest little host you could wish. He never brooded over abstract questions of politics; he found politics agree with him and his trade—battles, bayonets, broadswords, and bombs. Frederick the Great to him was a hard-featured comic old gentleman in a cocked hat and a leer, who swung in the sign over his head and above the black and white striped palings at his door, which bore the national colours of new-born Prussia.

"I like war," old Jacob would say, sending whiffs of blue smoke from his immense porcelain pipe. "War is a glorious thing; it brings custom. *Sapperment!* what with couriers, ministers, aides-de-camp, soldiers marching to glory, cowards bolting from glory, wounded brought in litters, and the whole menagerie, I find it thriving, *Gott sei Dank!* They all come here—all put up here, more or less, on the way to and from Berlin. All want horses—roar for horses; and if horses are not by the hand—as occasionally," remarked Jakob, with a fat wink, "they are 'not, for an hour or two—the fellows must eat and drink, of course, and always order the best. *Ei du lieber Himmel!* of course! And here I am to serve them: fresh—jolly—lusty—gay!" Herr Krauss always divided his ejaculations with a skip, which was suggestive of a lively young hippopotamus. "But to work, to work," said Jakob, after a little of this exercise, which seemed to refresh him vastly. "Ei! Thou! Thickhead! Hans! Where art thou?" "Here am I!" answered a long-haired lanky waiter,

appearing from the inside. "What does it please you to want?"

"Have the old cow killed to day," said Jakob; "guests are always asking after Hamburg beef. Tell the cook to pull up some strawberry leaves: people like that new drink from China—tea, as they call it. Bring up some more of that red-currant wine from the cellar, for they will order champagne. Fresh, now—sharp!"

"At will. But does the master expect company?" asked the waiter.

"Company, swinebag? Ei, thou sheephead! Hast thou not heard of the great battle near Prague, where the king has defeated the accursed Austrians? Hounds-foot! of course I expect company. The victors must return. Make thyself off, jackass!"

Thus mildly reproved, Hans obeyed, when at that moment a post-chaise rolled up to the old inn.

"*Sapperment noch e mal*, here comes the first. A young mamsell: so. And alone: so." And Jakob, calling his people, toddled off to welcome the arrival.

A pretty, buxom lass in the dress of a waiting maid jumped out of the chaise, and laughingly seized old Jakob's hand.

"Why, what's this?" cried the host. "Is it Mamsell Lischen?"

"In her own person," she answered, laughing.

"What, the charming maid of Madame von Edelstein? Ei, Thunderweather!" exclaimed Jakob, expressive of great astonishment.

"You haven't forgotten me then, Jakob."

"Forgotten the dear little tirewoman of Madame von Edelstein, who was Fräulein Cavellus when I lived in her father's household some seven years ago? Ach, that would be forgetting. No. But the seven years don't look like seven, judging from you, Lischen. And where is the honoured mistress?"

"She is following after. But come into the house, Herr Jakob: I want to take you into confidence."

The host followed her, puffing away at a pipe which had gone out in his surprise, and puffing away in behalf of his own lungs, which had also suffered something. To relieve himself, he leant against a big stove in the room which they entered; and in this position, being absorbed in admiration of the fair Lischen, he broiled gently, until his legs actually smoked.

"Now, Jakob," said Lischen, "this is a secret. Dear me, what a smell! Is anything on fire?"

Jakob looked about him and then down. "Probably my legs. *Kreuzsakrament*, yes. So. It's all right."

"Well, Jakob you remember my mistress? Yes, don't interrupt me; of course you do. Also her curious marriage with the young Herr von Edelstein. You recollect how his father, the old Edelstein, saved the life of her father, the old Cavellus. From gratitude, the old Cavellus promised his daughter, an heiress, to the old Edelstein's son, then poor. This was settled when they were mere babies; but when he was about sixteen—"

"Who?"

"Stupid! why the young Edelstein of course. And she nearly twelve—"

"Who?"

"Why my mistress, blockhead. The old Herr Cavellus found himself on his deathbed."

"Mnja!" ejaculated Jakob.

"Don't interrupt, Mr. Host. So to insure his promise being kept, the old Herr sent for the young people, and had them married before his eyes."

"Mnja."

"Silence. Married at his deathbed. And then Peter took him."

"Which Peter?"

"Saint Peter of course."

"Ach so."

"He died, in other words. Well, the young bridegroom was packed off the moment the ceremony was over, and sent off to the war, which had just broken out. He never saw his bride after the ceremony. He joined his regiment; achieved honour; was made a lieutenant; fought more battles; won them—"

"Ach ja! Battles—honour—glory—*fame—Bajonetten—Pistolen—Canonen—Himmel—Feuer—Donner*—"

cried old Jakob waving his pipe like a standard, and skipping wonderfully between each word.

"Will you be quiet? Well, meanwhile he and his bride kept up a correspondence which never slackened in ardour or punctuality. He has never seen her these six years, but he has made a perfect ideal of his young wife, and pictures her—oh! perfection. And just now,

having obtained leave of absence, he is coming back to Berlin all ardour to rejoin his wife."

"Mnja. And she?"

"Why, the fact is," said Lischen, dropping her voice, "my mistress, Frau von Edelstein, is rather doubtful of the effect she may produce on her husband. He makes her out such an angel, you know. She is that, as near as a woman can be considered an angel—by a woman, you know—but she is modest and afraid of disappointing him. So she wants to test him—to try his opinion of her, not as his wife, but as an ordinary lady."

"Ach so. I begin to see," cried Jakob Krauss, his eyes twinkling.

"So she is coming here to Holzapfel to meet him at this post-house; where you, Herr Krauss, will be good enough to recognise in her, not the Frau von Edelstein—"

"Mnja."

"I say no—but the Frau General Ochsenkopf, wife of the noble Herr General Ochsenkopf, lying wounded in Leipsic."

The ecstatic Jakob, in the extremity of delight, once more took refuge against the stove and singed awfully. He then swore the most sanguinary oaths that Lischen was the rarest and cunningest baggage going, and her acuteness was enough to drive him to the Hangman. The Hangman was a favourite personage in Jakob's vocabulary of ejaculations, and shared the honour of pre-eminence with that meteorological phenomenon, Thunderweather.

Just then another chaise called him to the door. Two postilions in pig-tails, four horses with the shortest of legs and the longest of tails, a rickety old coach, and its occupant a young, pretty and well-bred lady. This was the Frau von Edelstein referred to.

Jakob rushed up, and with most comic gravity welcomed the gracious, honoured and estimable Frau General Ochsenkopf to his poor house. The young lady, laughingly accepting his hospitality, asked if the Herr Captain von Edelstein had arrived. No; he had not yet arrived; did he know that the gracious Frau expected him? Heaven forbid! he imagined the gracious Frau to be in Berlin—at least his own Frau. The present Frau, lamentably severed from her wounded General, was another Frau, who was most anxious to see the Herr Captain.

"You must understand, Jakob, that he must be detained here a few hours, and thrown into my society. You can manage this."

Jakob swore by Thunderweather he could. If he couldn't, might the Hangman fetch him. With this pious aspiration, the little host toddled out to lock his stable doors.

"Oh, Lischen," exclaimed Otilie von Edelstein, "I am frightened. The least thing makes my heart beat. A posthorn sets it galloping. Dost thou think he will like me?"

"Like you only!" retorted Lischen. "He must be a—granite bombshell," said Lischen, by way of expressing extremity of insensibility, "if he doesn't love you at once."

"Thou flatterest me."

"Nature has flattered you, not I. But will you like him, madame?"

"I love him! He is brave, noble, victorious; he can fight like an angel, and writes love letters like—oh, like—"

"An archangel; quite so. And here, I really believe, he comes."

Otilie turned pale, and wanted to run away. Then she turned red, and wanted to run to the window. Then she turned both colours, looked very pretty, and said she really, must, would, and should faint. But she didn't.

Another rickety chaise, more pig-tailed postilions and long-tailed horses, which dragged their burden with the air of being always longing to lie down and always disappointed of their wish. Two gentlemen in the Prussian uniform alighted: both young, both mustached; one tall and remarkably handsome, the other shorter and by no means handsome, but evidently a gentleman as well as an officer. At the sight of men, Otilie declared she really could not show herself just then, and ran into the room allotted her, which adjoined the *Speisesaal* or public room. So Lischen was left in the *Speisesaal*, as the officers alighted.

"Herr Host," cried the handsome Prussian before the door. "You may bring us a couple of bottles of wine, but first have fresh horses put to."

"The wine the Herren have only to order; but the

horses are unfortunately impossible. I haven't a horse in all my stable," said old Jakob with the most dejected countenance.

The handsome officer stamped impatiently. "Not a horse."

"Not a pitiable, miserable, soulless jackass even," answered Jakob.

The handsome officer swore the longest polysyllable in the German vocabulary. "Why, what is this for an infernal, shameless, *verfuchte* hostelry!" he exclaimed. "When will horses be ready, Herr Sheephead?"

"In two hours, *gnädiger Herr*."

"Two devils! Two miserable demoniacal hours to wait here, while I am burning to get on to Berlin!"

("He is a dear man that," thought Lischen at the window, "I hope he may be the Captain von Edelstein.")

The handsome officer was evidently in a rage, and walked up and down before the inn, until the population of Holzapfel, consisting of two old women, five children and a gendarme, collected before the sign of the Old Fred.

"Come come, Ritterborn," exclaimed the shorter officer; "let us have patience and try the wine here."

("Ritterborn? Ah then he is not the Captain," sighed Lischen.)

"To purgatory with thy wine," cried Ritterborn, "I am burning to get on."

"But thou canst not get on yet, and why burn, under the circumstances? Come, old fellow, I'm hungry, and want a sausage or a slice of ham." So saying he dragged his sulky friend up the steps and into the *Speisesaal*.

"I shall walk on to Potsdam," said the cross officer.

"Bah, nonsense. What, with that wound in thy arm?"

"A fleabite—nothing. Hallo Franz," he exclaimed, seeing Lischen, "there's a pretty girl."

"So there is. I shall go in for her," said Franz.

"Pooh, nothing of the kind. I am going in for her."

"But thou art married, Ritterborn."

"Well, but good heaven, my dear fellow, I don't know my wife yet." He pushed his friend aside, and sauntering up to Lischen took her by the hand.

"This," said he, "is a better medicine for wounds than all the surgeons in the army could prescribe."

"Excuse me, *mein Herr*," and Lischen pushed him away, "but I know nothing about wounds."

"Yet thy glances are arrows."

"Blunt ones, perhaps."

"My heart denies that," said the young officer.

"Then don't believe it."

"And yet it never lies to me."

"It does to me, then," retorted Lischen.

"When?"

"Just now."

"Thou meanest when it speaks of thy beauty?"

"I mean when it talks twaddle to pass the time till the horses come," answered the saucy Lischen.

"Franz," exclaimed Ritterborn, "this is the most impudent jewel I have ever seen. I give thee my honour-word, Franz, I am desperately in love with her, and must kiss her."

"My dear fellow, thou art my bosom friend, but thou shalt never kiss her until I inaugurate the process," returned Franz; and by a dexterous movement he whisked Lischen away, and tucked her under his own arm.

"Go away, sir; go away. I don't like post-house acquaintances," cried Lischen.

"What, refuse a warrior a kiss?"

"Well—no—not a warrior, perhaps," answered Lischen, demurely. "I—I—like heroes."

And the arrangement being satisfactorily concluded, she vanished into her room.

When she was gone, the officer who had been addressed as Ritterborn took two or three impatient turns and resumed his excited manner. "A thousand cannons!" he exclaimed; "what a cursed hostelry with its horses!"

"Thou art a worthy grumbler," returned his friend, "to complain of a delay which thou couldst fill up by making love to every girl in the house. A nice husband to profess impatience to meet his wife!"

"Go to—never mind where—the bourne of crusty bachelors. I shall walk to Potsdam," cried Ritterborn.

"Nothing of the sort. A wounded man too! Why thou wouldst bring on inflammation in that arm of thine."

"Pooh! A plaguy scratch."

"Thou hast to thank the plaguy scratch for so far propitiating a rich uncle with the notion of thy valour, that he left thee a nice fortune for thy heroic sufferings."

"On condition of my taking his name—yes."

"And what then?" said Franz. "Ritterborn is a good family name—every whit as good as Edelstein. But hast thou written the news of thy fortune to thy wife?"

"No. I intend that, like my wound, to be a pleasant surprise. But where in the name of the abominable are those horses? Why don't they come? Where's the landlord? Where's everybody? *Pots-Element!* I'll smash the whole establishment, if I am not attended on. Here goes a chair—and here goes thy sausage—and here the table—and here—here—here—"

The frantic young man was actually upsetting and flinging about the furniture, and the entrance of Jakob only provoked him into seizing that worthy host and shaking him violently in his apron, when suddenly the door of the ante-room opened and Madame von Edelstein stood before them.

"I regret, gentlemen," said Otilie, in a tone of contemptuous courtesy, "that I have to request Prussian officers to respect the presence of a lady."

The surprised Ritterborn—otherwise Von Edelstein, for, as the reader will have seen, it was none other than her unrecognised and unrecognising husband—drew back, colouring deeply. His friend Franz came to his assistance.

"If my friend," said he politely, "had only suspected the neighbourhood of a lady, I am sure he—"

"Would never have laid himself open to reproach on account of a roughness for which he earnestly apologises," added Ritterborn respectfully.

"I am satisfied, gentlemen, and recall my complaint," returned Otilie.

Now the above passed quickly enough; and yet some equally swift thoughts had passed through two minds. First of all the lady had thought to herself, "What a handsome man; and secondly the gentleman had conceived in his own moral consciousness, "That's an uncommonly pretty woman." They were neither of them very abstruse remarks—mentally considered—but they had their effect.

The suave Ritterborn then conceived a luminous idea, which occurred to him in this form. "Why," said Ritterborn to his own moral consciousness, "should I not pass the interval of waiting here by making myself agreeable to a pretty woman whom I have annoyed?" And Ritterborn's moral consciousness answered Ritterborn, "There's no reason, my dear fellow, why you shouldn't." So he set to work and made himself agreeable. He learnt the gracious lady was going to Leipsic. Was waiting for horses. So—*tausend Sapperment!*—was he. Did the gracious lady think of dining at the hotel? Well—yes, she did. A blessed meal-time, so did he. Might he order dinner?

Without waiting for a reply, he did, and then took his friend into a corner. "Look here, my dearest friend, Franz von Lahnberg," said he, "I will take it as the greatest favour if you will accompany the worthy landlord into the kitchen and see him serve up a good dinner. Do, there's a good comrade. She is the prettiest woman I've seen this campaign, and I—I want you out of the way—there, go." And the good-natured Lahnberg suffered himself to be pushed out of the room.

The free-and-easy young gentleman then took a chair by the side of the lady, and proceeded to improve the occasion.

"A few minutes ago," he began, "I regretted a rudeness which drew down your rebuke."

"And have you ceased to regret it?" asked Otilie, smiling.

"I cannot regret that which has resulted in an acquaintance so agreeable to myself."

"I have compelled the compliment," she returned.

"No; it is offered spontaneously."

"You wish to prove that an officer from the field has not forgotten the arts of a courtier."

"I would rather show he preserves the candour of a soldier."

"Who tries by such asserted candour to embarrass a woman," retorted Otilie. "But one can afford to overlook the faults of a conqueror."

"When he stands before you conquered."

"It is only his mockery which can offend," Otilie added.

"It is only a free heart which can mock," was Ritterborn's reply.

"So," said Otilie, "you are leading hearts?"

"It is my only suit."

"Why you have only taken five minutes to know me."

"I shall take longer—much longer—to forget you," answered the coxcomb.

"Thanks for that assurance. But suppose we talked of something else?"

"With all my heart. But of what? Of the misfortune that has lately befallen Berlin?"

"What misfortune?"

"That of losing you."

"No, not of that. You are wounded, *mein Herr!* I trust your wound is not dangerous?"

"Heart-wounds usually are."

Otilie coloured. "Enough sir, I beg—nay, I insist."

"Madame, I obey," he replied. "I can sacrifice my inclination, and will not breathe another syllable of my love."

"Sir! What love? How dare you?"

"What," added Ritterborn bitterly, "can it matter to you, though my heart burst in bearing silently the chains half an hour's intercourse with you has inalienably riveted? What though I carry for ever the memory of your look—the hopeless longing for your love—"

Otilie rose angrily. "You insult me, sir, and I will not listen to more. I have duties which I honour, which I— which I love, and which I should betray if I remained longer to hear you." And she swept haughtily from the room.

She was really incensed, and very pretty she looked in her anger. In her own private room she walked to the window and looked out on the white chaussee; and then she pulled a bunch of violets from a jug that stood by the window, and cast them impetuously on the floor, repeating to herself, "The impertinent coxcomb; why did I encourage him?" Then she walked to the wall where there hung a picture of improbably coloured ladies and gentlemen in a boat on a very green water, underneath which was printed "Die Wasserpartie," in German, and "La partie à l'eau," in French, and "The party of water," in English. "I wonder," thought Otilie, "if my husband is as handsome as that coxcomb." (For Lischen had told her the coxcomb's name was Ritterborn, and she still expected her husband.) "If he were . . . I hope he is not so . . . I hope—"

And then the silly young woman broke into a flood of tears. In which state her waiting maid found her. "Oh madame," cried Lischen running in, "its all found out—all discovered. The Herr Ritterborn in there began questioning me who you were. I told him you were the Frau General Ochsenkopf, going to rejoin your husband in Leipsic. He seemed so disheartened to hear you were married, that—that—he began to pull me about and kiss me, just to cheer himself up, you know. And then he got hold of a handkerchief of yours I was mending, which was torn; and he went away with it. And it's marked, too; that's the worst; it's marked with your name!"

Otilie was startled. "Oh dear, dear! he will find out then that I am not Frau Ochsenkopf! He will think me an adventurer, who has told him a falsehood! What is to be done? I will go and explain. I would not have him think ill of me—him above all others. At least—no I don't mean—but it's dreadful!"

And poor Otilie was really agitated. Meanwhile the deluded Ritterborn looked a picture of desolation when his friend Franz von Lahnberg re-entered the room.

"It's finished, my friend, it's all up," said he, dejectedly. "She is an angel of wit and beauty: I am madly in love with her; but I'm married and so is she. Fancy, Lahnberg, she's the wife of an idiotic General! An Ochsenkopf!"

"Pooh pooh!" answered Lahnberg. "She's nothing of the sort."

"But she says she is; and her maid says so."

"I tell thee she is not. I know Ochsenkopf: I served under him not long ago. He's no more married than I am."

"Not married!" cried Ritterborn.

"No more than that confounded stove, which looks black enough to be married and henpecked, by all the saints of celibacy!" his friend replied.

"Well but—dost thou mean—heigho, I am rather confused." He raised the handkerchief he had been holding and wiped his brow with it; and his eye fell on the name marked in the corner. "Why powers of

earth—why legions of carabineers—bombs and pistols—what's this? Look here Franz—look I say! It's her name—my wife's name, thou stupid donkey thou! See—see: Otilie von Edelstein! *Pots-Element!* I believe she's my wife!"

Greatly astonished, Franz would have taken the handkerchief; but the excited husband pushed him away. "Not a sacrilegious finger dost thou lay upon the treasure—the tell-tale bijou! It's her handkerchief, and she's my wife! *Juch-he juch-he!*" cried the delicious young man, dancing about the apartment and knocking the chairs over in a perfect frenzy. But all at once he paused.

"Franz von Lahnberg, she has served me a trick. Knowingly or unknowingly she made me miserable, and I'll pay her out—just for a joke. She doesn't know me: has not heard my name, nor thine. I'll introduce thee as her husband. Ho-ho! Thou contemptible ninny, thou shalt see how she will despise thee, how her mind will revolt from the idea that she is fettered to a *Spitzbube* like thee!"

The good-natured Franz laughed heartily, and seemed to relish the notion; so it was arranged that he was to be presented as the real Von Edelstein, and that he was to behave with as ill a grace as possible, so as to disappoint Otilie. Hardly had these preliminaries been settled when the fair Otilie entered. She was very pale, and uncommonly pretty; and her beauty was heightened by a touch of embarrassment. Behind her followed Lischen.

"I have to explain a deception, gentlemen," she began, "which arose from no desire to mislead you, but had its origin in totally remote causes. I am not the Frau General Ochsenkopf."

"I was aware of the fact," answered Ritterborn quietly.

"Indeed, sir? Did you find it out from—"

"Partly madame from your handkerchief, but chiefly from one who has every reason to know who you are."

Otilie started. "You mean—?"

"Allow me," said Ritterborn, leading forward Lahnberg, "to introduce Herr Hauptmann von Edelstein to his lady wife."

She turned pale as death itself and then flushed fiery red. The obsequious Franz was bowing and cringing with an execrable grace. "I have much pleasure," said he in a hard discordant voice which spoke much for his powers of ventriloquism, "to make acquaintance with my wife under such circumstances. Proud I'm sure; and how do you feel, altogether? How have you been, on the whole, for the last six years?" This was said with a sickly smile, as he rubbed both hands together and stood awkwardly before her.

Poor Otilie was terribly abashed.

"Is this my husband?" she thought—"this my hero? Oh heavens! he has the manners of a Frankfurt Jew."

"Get up more fire," whispered Ritterborn to his friend.

Franz raised and kissed Otilie's hand.

"That's it: keep it up," continued Ritterborn, who was enjoying the scene immensely.

Franz made the motion of elevating the marital salute to her cheek.

"Hold hard—not so fast: you need not do that," whispered the husband.

"But the unities of the situation?" returned his friend.

"Unities be hanged! you're not to kiss my wife," and he plucked the unabashed Franz away.

Otilie's discomfort was fast increasing, when her maid stepped to her rescue, "Don't give way; don't be downhearted," whispered Lischen. "They may be merely making fools of us. We are not going to accept husbands without proofs." So saying she turned to the officers.

"Well gentlemen, it seems that this is the Herr Captain, the husband of my mistress. Very well; only we should like to see some evidence of identity. Ladies cannot be too cautious—especially when they don't know their husbands by sight."

As she was speaking, the ready Ritterborn thrust a bundle of letters into his friend's hand.

"Evidence?—oh certainly," said Franz. "These gracious tokens of love are in the handwriting of my wife. I have worn them night and day next my heart."

Otilie's hopes sank, for she recognised her letters. But Lischen was not to be easily convinced.

"Good, Herr Captain. As you have written letters in reply to these, and as your excellent handwriting is

known to my lady, perhaps you can sit down and write a loveletter here. Your writing will identify you at once."

This was a staggering blow. "What's to be done now!" whispered Franz parenthetically to his friend.

The rogue's wit did not forsake him. He came forward easily and said, "Circumstances force a little disclosure. My friend is a good fellow—a first class fellow, but he writes a diabolical fist. His *c's* are perfectly parallelograms, and he can't cross his *t's* with safety to the other letters. His *f's* are simply execrable, and he is not to be trusted with his *p's* and *q's*. Now you, madame, write like a seraph, and your husband was ashamed of his hand contrasted with yours. What did that too sensitive mind resolve? Rather than degrade himself in the loved ones eyes, he sought the aid of one to whom nature and six lessons at three thalers a lesson had been more gracious. He got an amanuensis. I was the amanuensis.

"You, sir!"

"I. To prove my words I will at once indite what he would write in my place." He went to a side table, sat down, and scribbled a couple of lines on a sheet of paper. "Your waiting-maid desired a love-letter, and I have written one. Do you recognise the hand?"

Ottillie took it and read. It consisted of two lines thus:—

"Unstudied be a letter to my belle;
For when love dictates, lovers must write well."

Ottillie's eyes moistened, as she looked from the paper to the writer. "So handsome, so ready, with a wit so refined," she thought. "Oh if only he were my husband! The thought flashed across her mind like an inspiration:—"Why should he not be my husband? Why not as likely as yonder goose? Good heavens, if he be!"

Now she was a woman, and resolution came with the quickness with which it does come to her sex on such emergencies. "I'll try him," she thought; "I'll apply Solomon's old test to him, and see whether the instinct of the creature will betray him."

She turned to Franz, and laying down the paper said in an altered tone, "I am satisfied: indeed I was satisfied at once. My heart ratifies the decision of my reason; and thou, Ernst, are now my all in all!"

She held out her hands to the astonished Franz as she spoke.

"Ernst, dear Ernst, my own husband! come to a wife's fond arms."

Thoroughly discomposed, Ritterborn forgot his part and interposed. "I beg your pardon," he began.

"Back sir, and let me go to my husband!" cried Ottillie proudly. "Oh embrace me, Ernst!"

And before her husband could prevent her, she was hanging to Franz's neck.

The friend's look at that moment was a whimsical mixture of satisfaction and embarrassment. Here was a pretty woman clinging to him, and according to the unities of the situation he was bound to act in a lover-like manner and return her embrace. On the other hand a thunder-cloud was gathering on the real husband's face, for the game was getting rather serious.

"I think," stammered Franz to his supposed wife, "you—you had better go away."

"We will go away," she answered; "we will leave at once." And then turning to her maid, "Lisichen," she exclaimed, "go order the cabriolet at once: my husband and I return to Berlin. Oh Ernst, Ernst, I love thee—I love thee!"

"Thunder and lightning!" roared Ritterborn beside himself, "this is rather too much! Franz, get out of that, or I'll kick thee!"

"My dear fellow," Franz expostulated, "what the devil can I do?"

What could he? He was dreadfully embarrassed with his friend's wife hanging about him.

"I beg, sir, you will move aside, said Ottillie," and allow my husband and me to pass into another room.

"Another room, madame! A—nother—" he gasped.

"Certainly. Is there anything extraordinary in a wife wishing to be alone with her husband after a long absence? Unless indeed," added Ottillie roguishly, "another husband unexpectedly turns up, who disputes the claim of the first. You are betrayed sir. Ernst, veritable Ernst, I have found thee out!"

It was no use longer dissembling. The farce was played out. As she released the arm of one spouse, and took that of the other, she whispered, "I do not regret the change as yet: if thou wouldst ever have me regret it, cease to love me."

And to the ears of old Jakob in the passage came the smothered sound of kisses.

"ORAT QUI LABORAT."

I.

There is a song that riseth from city and from plain
At early dawn of morning light, and when the pale stars wane;
Where wander lonely streams that song still sighs among
the grass,
You hear it in the serried ranks, when stern battalions
pass;
It soundeth from the anvil, and it riseth from the loom,
At matins and at evensong, in sunshine or in gloom;
You may not find a priest to guide, or church, or altar fair,
Yet "Orat qui laborat," still, for labour it is pray'r!

II.

Deep in the bosom of a wood, where dusky Indians stray,
The emigrant is toiling on, a thousand leagues away;
I ween his brain will sometimes reel beneath the sultry
glow—
He sees his home at eventide, and hears the oxen's low.
But not for these he stops to sigh—for oh! there's many a
tree
That bars the way between him and his home across the
sea;
And noble is the psalm his axe keeps ringing out on air,
Ay! "Orat qui laborat," still for labour it is pray'r!

THE WATCHER OF THE DEAD.

Beloved! dost dread the shrouded dead.
"Oh, woe! let rest the dead!" she said.

BÜRGER'S "LEONORE."

It was a dark evening in November. Fred Rayton and I were sitting thoughtfully over the fire, smoking meditatively and saying very little. The fire was doing its best to talk to us both, for it crackled and winked with amazing energy, and I seemed to see the strangest and most fantastic faces in the depths of its red-litten chambers. We were both medical students; it was not very remarkable then that I should fancy I saw a sort of unearthly dissecting-room in the fire, with the leaden covered tables and lines of "subjects"—all in order; indeed, this was a very likely picture for a student of medicine to call up, but at the same time I remember thinking it very strange, and shaking off the idea and the vision with a start, and turning to Fred, who was smoking placidly with his usual look of calm expression in his handsome face, I said, "What are we to do to-night?"

"My dear boy, I haven't the least idea," he said, not removing his pipe and looking lazier than ever.

"I feel as if I wanted excitement; can't you propose something?"

"An undue indulgence in alcoholic stimulants will produce the required state of mind," said Fred; "it can be done very cheaply."

"Nonsense!" I returned, "some adventure."

"But we've done everything that I know of; find out something new, and I'm quite willing—"

"Ah!" I said, "there's the difficulty."

And so it was. We had exhausted all the means of producing sensational effects on our minds. Mentally, we had "nothing to wear;" at least I imagined so.

We both smoked despondingly for some minutes—until at length Fred said—

"Look here, you think we've done everything. There's something you've not done, although it's nothing very new to me. Will you go. There's a chance to-night." I knew what he meant—body snatching (for it was many years ago, reader). We had often talked of such an expedition, but, to tell the truth, I had rather discouraged the idea, not quite liking it.

"Well," he said, "will you go?" there's a chance to-night. Old McCreep and his brother want to present Masteril (our lecturer) with a subject for to-morrow: it's a young man who was buried two days ago. They say they'll be watching his grave!—but who cares? Give us a dark night, and we'll do the trick."

"Yes," I said, conquering my irresolution, "I will go."

"All right," he said, "let's put our great coats on, and then we'll go down to McCreeps'. They won't start for an hour or so yet, I dare say; so we've plenty of time." We put on our stoutest coats, for the night was very cold. Fred armed himself with a pocket-pistol of huge size, and we started for the house of the brothers McCreep. After a walk through the dirtiest and most tortuous streets in the city, we arrived at the door of a small hovel that seemed stuck like a barnacle on a ship's

bottom on to a row of larger houses, also in a state of considerable dilapidation. Here lived Mr. Job Creep and his brother, gentlemen who pursued no particular calling, but employed themselves usefully in various ways, for the benefit of society. Earning a decent livelihood, and not over scrupulous, so said their enemies, as to the means by which they replenished their exchequer when empty.

Doubtless they were honest men; but I am bound to say their appearance was against them, for two more villainous looking old rascals I never saw in my life. Job, the elder, who seemed to lead his brother in all things from drinking to the more serious affairs of life, was a wizened yellow old fellow, with queer crooked legs, shoulders and arms of apparently immense strength, little heady red eyes that seemed to flash on you in the dark like a cat's, and a voice that was the reverse of musical. His brother was very like him, only not quite so muscular, and a trifle dirtier; both were redolent of whisky—and were playing some game with a perfectly black pack of cards on the top of a barrel by the light of about an inch of candle, when we broke in upon their amusement.

On our entrance they both rose, and gave us what appeared to be a polite, but was to me a perfectly unintelligible greeting. They seemed to know our errand, for the younger one immediately shouldered some spades, &c., and a large sack, while Job provided himself with a couple of lanterns and some few small implements apparently for opening the coffin; then we all went out together.

Through some intricate streets like those by which we had approached Mr. McCreep's mansion, while the city looked strange and dismal in the uncertain light—for we only got a peep at the moon now and then—we proceeded to the churchyard, and soon reaching the wall by which it was surrounded, commenced some cautious reconnoitering. This was in all such expeditions highly necessary as the friends of the deceased very often kept guard for some days over their graves, with a view of preventing the McCreeps' operations for the good of science. At last we got over the wall favoured by the darkness and ensconced ourselves behind a row of tall tombstones, about twenty yards from the grave which had been inspected during the day by the brothers, and the position of which was therefore accurately known. It was so dark just at this time that I, who was a little in advance of the rest of the party, was requested in a hoarse whisper by Job to get still nearer the grave and ascertain more certainly whether there was anyone there. I crept carefully still nearer, and was within a few yards of the place, when a sudden break in the clouds showed us the moon, flooded the churchyard with light, and caused me to crouch down upon the turf in order to avoid being seen, for at the same time the light revealed some one standing near the grave.

The figure was quite plain in the moonlight—a tall girlish form, in a dress of some grey material, a hood thrust over her head, and something I could not see plainly clasped in her hands as leaning on a tombstone she bent sorrowfully over the little mound of freshly disturbed earth; silent she stood, as motionless as the stone on which she was leaning, and although she must have heard us get over the wall, seemingly quite forgetful of the fact that anyone was on the spot except herself. As I gazed at her with a strong feeling of pity in my heart, for surely I thought it some one mourning too deeply the dead, she turned her head in my direction so that I had a full view of her face; I was startled by its exceeding beauty and by its unearthly paleness, it was more like the face of the dead than the living; the deep violet eyes seemed to have no life in them, the full lips were deathly blue, and looked strangely cold in the moonlight, and I began to fancy the fair watcher was walking in her sleep. Knowing the consequence might be dangerous if such was the case and she was suddenly awakened, I was very careful not to stir nor make the slightest noise, and I trusted that my companions who must also see her would not come forward whilst she remained by the grave. Just at this time, too, I was conscious of a faint sweet smell as from some freshly-gathered flowers, and I fancied it was some flowers, probably hot-house ones, that the maiden held in her hands.

I still crouched amongst the graves quite uncertain what to do, when my doubts were put an end to by the advance of my companions, who came forward rapidly impatient of waiting any longer, Fred leading them, loudly humming an operatic air, not at all impressed by the solemnity of the scene. I turned round to warn

them to retire, when Fred, who was close to me, said,—

"What are you waiting for? we must begin."

"Don't you see the girl?" I said.

"Girl!—what on earth do you mean? I've seen nobody since we got into the churchyard."

I turned to the grave. The McCreeps were already busy at their work, shovelling the loose earth out with great expedition; the maiden had disappeared.

"Didn't you see a girl at the place as you came up to us?" I asked Fred.

"Nonsense! you must be dreaming; I saw no girls," said he.

This was assuredly very strange—I had seen the maiden watching by the grave, and how she had managed to disappear so quickly, and how it was Fred and the McCreeps had not seen her (for I questioned the two old men also very closely) I could not make out.

Our work proceeded quickly: Mr. Job and his brother seemed remarkable adepts at the business of dissection, and we very soon got down to the coffin, which they forced open with the small tools which had been brought for the purpose. We were all bending over the body while it was thus exposed to view, when I was conscious of the same faint indescribable scent I had noticed as accompanying the maiden, and looked up directly but could see no one. We were alone in the enclosure. I could not help fancying that the pale watcher stood unseen in our midst, that those weird violet eyes were steadily gazing on our deed, and I imagined I heard the rustling of those ghostly grey garments in the sighing of the wind.

Such ideas and meditations, however, were speedily put an end to, by the necessity for evacuating the churchyard, and getting the body with as little delay as possible into the dissecting-room; for Job McCreep had, on looking cautiously round during our operations, desisted what he said looked very like some one interested in our proceedings, who was not likely to view them with a favourable eye. With all possible speed, therefore, we filled up the grave, smoothed the turf nearly into the shape it had been before our visit, and decamped, bearing the body with us. As we left the churchyard I was certain I heard footsteps behind us, but it was so dark again by this time that we could not tell whether we were pursued or not. I felt certain we were, the sounds being confirmatory of McCreep's suspicions whilst at the grave. A short walk brought us to the dissecting-room, where, dismissing our ghoul-like coadjutors, we housed the corpse safely under its roof. Messrs. McCreep went away, hugely delighted at a small gratuity we had presented them with, muttering what I believe were benedictions on us, but sounded to English ears far more like oaths.

When they had gone, Fred said, "I tell you what it is, old Mastoid doesn't expect this subject; I believe it's intended as a delicate attention to him on the part of the McCreeps. Supposing we get it ready for dissection before the fellows come in the morning."

"All right," said I, "come and light the fire, and I'll get the injecting stuff."

We were obliged to dissect the subjects as quickly as we could in those days. The supply was so limited, we could not afford to wait and keep the bodies for any length of time, as is the custom in the anatomical rooms of the present day.

We had got the fire lighted, and all things ready to commence operations. I was looking out a scalpel to make the preparatory incision in the thigh (subjects are injected from the femoral artery) when there was a noise below as of some one attempting to open the door. We were rather startled, but relieved on finding it was only Job, who had returned for his snuffbox or some other indispensable accompaniment which he had left in the rooms. Fred went down with him again—to let him out, he said; but I heard the door close upon both of them. Master Fred had got tired of our work, and I was left to complete it by myself.

I was leaning over the fire, stirring the mixture to be injected, and thinking how very quiet and still everything was, when once more, and with feelings I will not attempt to describe, I recognised that strange faint scent of the churchyard—the odour from the flowers of the mysterious maiden. I will confess at once I felt considerably frightened; the whole thing was at once so strange and uncanny that my reason failed utterly to account for it. At the same time I felt that curious consciousness of someone else's presence in the room, which many people say they can feel in the dark when they are quite unaware of any person's proximity—a kind of animal magnetism. I nerved myself to look round; the red light from the fire and the faint rays

from my one candle served only to make more hideous the ghastly objects round the room, familiar as I was with the scene. I shuddered as I looked on it now, for my fancy peopled each dark corner with ghostly figures. As I cast my eyes round the room I became conscious of a shape that seemed to grow out of the air above the body we had just taken from the grave, and in a moment I again beheld the grey figure of the churchyard, and again the violet eyes fixed themselves with that terrible glassy stare on mine. The whole figure was so real that it was some moments before I could assure myself it was not the form of a real maiden who had tracked us to the college; but a minute's thought convinced me that it was an impossibility that anyone could have entered the dissecting-rooms without our knowledge, and I knew that what I beheld was either a phantasm of my own brain or a visitant from another world.

I gazed fascinated upon the spectre. She seemed to be caressing the lifeless form before her, smoothing back the hair from the dead face, gently patting the dead cheeks, hanging with unutterable fondness over it, and bending down to kiss the livid lips, as though that spirit-touch could waken the blood to run rosily within them once more; while on the beautiful phantom and the silent corpse before her, the firelight danced and flickered as if in enjoyment of that weird and fearsome scene.

I could bear it no longer. I turned away and hid my face in my hands. How long I sat in that position I cannot tell, but when I next dared to look up, my candle had died down in its socket, the room was nearly in darkness—the phantom had vanished. It may be readily conceived that I had little heart to go on with my work, which, as the fire had gone out, would require to be begun afresh. Even had I been so inclined, I could not have done so, for just at this time I heard steps on the stairs and voices in loud discussion. I hastened to conceal myself, and lay down, covered with a large cloth in a shell or sort of rough coffin used to carry subjects from the dissecting-room to the lecturer's table.

The owners of the voices entered hurriedly, and I knew at once they had come to recover our spoil.

A loud voice exclaimed, "Here it is!" The wooden shell in which I lay was immediately seized, and in a few moments they were hurrying down the stairs with what they imagined to be the body of their friend, for I was concealed by the cloth which I had drawn close over me, and luckily no one had looked under it as yet.

Here was a pleasant predicament! If I lay quiet I should be buried alive, and if I made myself known I should fall an easy victim to their vengeance, which I knew would fall heavily on any one they found concerned in the events of the night. Indeed I heard them muttering curses on "the doctors," as they hurried me along. I came to the resolution to remain perfectly quiet, and to start up and make a run for it when we got to the churchyard, while they were opening out the grave again.

But fortune favoured me most unexpectedly. We had no sooner reached the churchyard than one of my bearers proposed to leave the body (my humble self) behind the church while they opened the grave, so that in the event of being disturbed, it should not be recovered by any emissaries from the hospital. This was agreed to; they laid the coffin down by the side of the church and walked off. It is needless to say I jumped up and ran away as hard as I could, laughing to myself at their disgust on finding they had prepared the grave when there was no body forthcoming to fill it.

Day was breaking, and I went to the college to warn them against any further attempts at retaliation; but no measures were taken. My captors had probably been too much scared at my disappearance.

It is now many years since, but those events will never be effaced from my recollection; for, often when I sit by the fireside in the winter-time, memory brings that terrible night again before me—again the light seems to dance upon the phantom, again the violet eyes seem to grow out of the darkness, and that beautiful pale face is passionately pressed once more to the pallid lips of the unresponsive dead.

My wife will steal to my side on such occasions, for she knows well what thoughts are haunting me; and her soft hand alone can chase away the shadows that gather round me at these memories. One kiss and they are gone in the silence, while the firelight lingers as lovingly as my looks, on her dear familiar face.

H. C.

HERBSTLIED.

One by one the leaves are falling
With a sad and solemn sound;
One by one the flowers are fading,
Fading everywhere around.
In the trees the cold wind soundeth
With a weird and dismal tone,
And the woods are very dreary,
Making their autumnal moan.

One by one the hearts we cherish
Slowly fade away and die:
Some fireside has one chair vacant,
As the year rolls swiftly by.
Spring will come, and trees will blossom,
Flowers will bloom, but days of yore,
With the loved ones who have perished,
Will return—ah, never more!

F. S. C.

CHILD OF THE SUN:

By HENRY FARNIE.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH BELISAIRE SAVES HIS MASTER'S LIFE.

DON IGNACIO DE SEGUERA, noble of Spain, and Captain of the King's Valencian Body-guard, was playing a very deep game, and one whose ultimate issue was of the most uncertain kind. It is, indeed, wonderful to extricate biography from the pages of history, and try to account for the apparently insane conduct of men who, apparently motiveless and unreasoning, rush from positions of security and eminence headlong into danger, and often to death. In every page of a nation's history, you will find examples of this *quasi* madness. Great revolutions—conspiracies—wars—royal alliances—have been brought about directly by the plotting and scheming of one master-brain which, with all its cunning, could not in the end retain its own life, but had to submit all its fine force to the dull blow of the headman's axe. In Don Ignacio's case, there appears to be something of this fatality at work. Let us see. He is of noble birth: he holds a confidential post near the person of His Majesty, Philip V.: he is heir to the estates and titles of the late Marquis de Montemayor—and of these nothing can deprive him but the apparition of a daughter of the Marquesa's, whom she lost when that daughter was a mere babe. It is not in the least probable that this child will ever be heard of more—indeed, Don Ignacio scorns the very idea as absurd. Therefore, one would think a little patient watching and waiting would be his best course; as, sooner or later, his rights must be admitted and confirmed to him. And this, indeed, would have been the natural and best course for Don Ignacio to take, had mischievous fate not contrived that the usual evil influence should be introduced into his counsels. A mother's love for her child upset all the promptings of his reason, and had well-nigh changed the dynasty of Spain. The Marquesa, as we have learned, still retained the fond, though superstitious idea that the life of her lost daughter had been spared—that she lived—that, in a word, she would be restored to her. This fancy, natural and excusable in a mother, had grown into a religious belief on the part of the Marquesa, and she so invested it outwardly with an appearance of reality, so to speak, as impressed many with a half-conviction that, after all, the lost heiress might turn up. In her suite of rooms at the palace, she had a chamber furnished for her daughter. Jewellery, laid out on the toilette table, awaited the arms and bosom of the lost señorita; costly raiment hung in the presses for the long-awaited daughter of the Montemayor. Then the Marquesa made ceremonious visits to the cathedral shrines, to pray for her absent daughter; and in conversation with her intimates about the court, the possible existence of her daughter was always alluded to as a fact about which there could be no dispute. True, all this could bear no logical examination, nor render the chances a whit more favourable for the realization of the Marquesa's hopes; but there is a wonderfully catching influence about all enthusiasm, and even Philip V. himself, grave and astute, turned a kindly ear to the widow lady's hopes. It would have required the asceticism of an anchorite, or the interested disbelief of Don Ignacio, to have withstood this touching faith on the part of such a noble creature as the Marquesa. Still in the

flush of beauty, still one of the loveliest women that adorned the court at Madrid, and kept from melancholy and retirement by the constant thought that it might be at any moment the eve of her daughter's return, the Marquesa was just the woman to gain an influence over such a chivalric monarch as Philip. Nor did she want admirers. Many a grandee of Spain would gladly have made her his wife, the more so that the king had over and over again declared that the destination of the titles and wealth of the Montemayors would be continued in the female line should the lost child ever be restored. Here then was a prize that many coveted: a handsome widow—herself a rich treasure to any man—with the guardianship in prospective of her daughter, should she turn up, or at all events, a very good chance of getting the king's sanction to diverting a part of the large estates of the late Marquesa from their likely destination to the hands of Don Ignacio. This last-named gentleman, albeit a kinsman of the Marquesa, and an officer of Philip's, was no favourite of the king. Not that His most sacred Majesty distrusted his allegiance, or even avoided having him near his presence; but it was well understood that the sunbeams of royal favour fell somewhat coldly in that quarter. The Marquesa simply detested him. Some people said she had refused his hand in marriage, and that he had vowed revenge; others ascribed other reasons; certain it was that the most frigid state was kept up between them, when they met on any occasion—which however, very seldom occurred.

This preliminary sketch of the relations subsisting between the Marquesa de Montemayor and De Segura, will prepare the reader to learn—what indeed, he may have already guessed from the broken soliloquy of Don Ignacio, when he retired in alarm from the Council-room with Estrella's note—that he was already far gone as a traitor to his king. It was even so. Unwilling to wait longer for the chance of a title and wealth that royal caprice—or, more unlikely though it be, the restoration to the Marquesa of her child—might destroy at any moment, Don Ignacio had, sometime before the epoch of which we are now writing, arranged a secret treaty with Charles III. (so called), by which that king promised him the title and estates of the Montemayors, the moment he was seated firmly on the throne of Spain. To the faithful performance by Don Ignacio of his part of the bargain may be safely attributed some of the disasters and much of the secret undermining which, as we narrated in a former chapter, were daily rendering the cause of Philip V. to all seeming more and more hopeless, and ere long we shall see in what way these machinations of Don Ignacio were carried out. Let us now follow the fortunes of Deboissy and his knave Belisaire, on the eventful evening when he had vowed to De Segura to make a third at the rendezvous near the Golden Fountain.

It was scarcely yet more than twilight when Deboissy, who had been striding up and down in his quarters impatiently ever since his interview with Don Ignacio, donned his mantle, and, substituting a plumed velvet bonnet for his ordinary military head-dress, called on Belisaire to make ready also.

"But it is not yet time," objected Belisaire dependently; "monieur will remember that—"

"Rascal! wouldn't thou have me keep a lady waiting? Get thy cloak on and feel that thy sword is not glued to its sheath. I faith, Belisaire, thou may'st have to lay about thee to-night. But 'tis for the fairest girl,—oh, such hair—such eyes! But enough, follow me!"

Leaving the quiet plaza where Deboissy was quartered, and tracking their way through one or two tortuous streets crowded with soldiers and gossiping town-folk, the French officer and his esquire soon reached the Prado—by this time slightly veiled in its perspective by gauzy shadows. They were, in fact, too soon, and Belisaire took a strategic advantage of the circumstances.

"But, mon capitaine," observed that astute man-at-arms, as they approached the *fuente d'oro*, and struck down the side path leading from it, "the lady has thought better of it. There's no one here."

Deboissy made no answer, but inspected the locality very carefully as he strode along. Belisaire followed up his advantage as he thought. Raising his voice a little more confidently, he said—

"There's no one here, monieur!"

But his master did not choose to hear, or, at least, to show that he heard.

"But there's nobody here!" repeated Belisaire for the third time, with increasing satisfaction.

"Well, airrah!" returned Deboissy, turning sharply round; "and what if there's not—eh?"

"We'll go home," promptly returned Belisaire.

"No, we won't," answered Capitaine Philippe, halting at the foot of a fine beech about fifty yards from the intersection of the paths. "No, we won't. Now that thou knowest where we are not going, would'st like to know where we are going?"

Belisaire would like to know if monsieur would be so good as—?

"Well, I shall indulge that curiosity of thine. I am about to return to the Fountain, there to lay *perdu* for the lady; thou—thou—"

"I?"

"Thou shalt go up this tree."

"Up that tree?"

"Up that tree. In that cloak thou wilt bear some resemblance to a huge squirrel."

"Monsieur is joking."

"Diab! Never was more serious in all my twenty-six years of existence. Up with you! The bark is a little rough, 'tis true: but what is a scratch to the lesson thou art getting in chivalry! Bless thy stars, Belisaire; they were propitious to thy good mother when thou didst originate. Up, I say."

"I go, my capitaine," groaned the little man, making a feeble effort to grasp the swelling girth of the beech; "but permit me, monsieur, to know—to know what I am to do when I am up. (*aside*) Oh, what the million thousand devils did I ever come to this accursed country for!"

"Why dost thou go up this tree, and what art thou to do when up? Villain! thou shalt know both, else thou mightest make some dreadful mistake. Know then that we must not frighten the lady away. Therefore I go behind yonder masonry, and thou retirest up amongst the leaves. Nothing could be clearer. It is excellent, Belisaire!"

Belisaire suggested that he would prefer exchanging hiding-places with his master.

"No, *coguin*, no," cried Philippe. "for I must be ready at a moment's notice to double on her like a hound on a hare. Secondly, thou shalt sit on thy bough like a huge owl, and, like that animal, thou shalt ponder over what is going on below. Be discreet. If all goes smoothly, thou shalt not quit thy perch; but shouldst thou hear sounds of wrangling, and ringing of scabbards, drop, and draw like a man. *Vive l'amour!* Up with thee!"

During this harangue Belisaire had been revolving in his mind the various contingencies of his position, and had come to the conclusion that, after all, to clamber up the tree and *there remain, combat or no combat*, would be about the best thing he could do. According he obeyed his master's injunction with commendable alacrity, inwardly vowing that, once up, all the Spaniards in Madrid, rapier in hand, would not make him come down again. With considerable difficulty, and a few shoves and imprecations from the impatient Deboissy, Belisaire finally reached the lower limb of the tree, some ten feet in air.

"There!" cried his master, surveying him with much placidity, "that will do. St. Louis! what an owl! Tell me, rascal, canst thou see anything from where thou art?"

"N-no," answered Belisaire, fondly believing that was the answer his master desired; "not a thing, monieur."

"Ha! that won't do, then—"

"Peste!"

"Move out on the limb—"

"But I shall fall!"

"That is thy affair. Move out, I say!" And the wretched esquire had, in fact, to move along the trembling bough, which swayed and rustled under his weight as if a gale were blowing through the tree.

"So, so, that is better," remarked Captain Philippe, critically, as he saw the fat little legs of his esquire dangling in mid-air; "Thou seest now?"

"Yes, my capitaine, everything," replied Belisaire, with the utmost alacrity.

"Bon! Now for my part. Thou hast thy instructions. Only in case of an alarm art thou to descend, but in that case, draw and strike home for France and my fair lady! *An revoir*, Belisaire!"

So saying, Deboissy walked away in the direction of the *fuente d'oro*, leaving his rotund esquire, hanging, like Mahomet's coffin, 'twixt heaven and earth.

"Now, may all the fiends seize me," soliloquised

Belisaire, as he shifted wearily from one side to the other, grasping nervously the while at the boughs above him—"if I do anything of the kind. Here I am, and here I stay. Luckily the night is going to be a dark one, and I have got a flask of *eau-de-vie* in my pocket. I won't touch it yet, though; there's no saying how long that mad master of mine may keep me here. Never mind, better hang here in a whole skin, than be down below for these hot-headed Spaniards to make holes of. Besides, they won't come near me, that's certain. The place of assignation was the fountain—yes—I heard Capitaine Philippe say so."

And with this assurance Belisaire adjusted one leg over the other, and executed an involuntary cradle movement in the leafy recesses of the beech. Meanwhile Deboissy had regained the fountain,—a huge mass of marble and freestone, representing some mythological subject in statuary, with ducts and mouths for the water, which, however, was not flowing on that particular evening. After walking round this structure in thought for a moment, Deboissy leapt up and coolly seated himself behind a very ugly caricature of a Triton, and passed his arm round the merman's neck. In the growing dusk it was impossible to tell—even had one been instructed where to look—where the stone ended and the flesh and blood image began. There Deboissy determined quietly to wait, and leave to chance the development of his stratagem. And the *dénouement* was not very far off.

Two figures—and of ladies—were shortly to be seen advancing toward the *fuente d'oro*. They were thickly veiled and walked close together. It was undoubtedly the fair unknown and her duenna. And so Deboissy thought.

"'Tis she!" he muttered half-rising from his crouching position: "now is my time, before the *caballero* comes. I'll leave my cloak, or she may think me a *ladrone* or worse in the darkness. Fortune favour me!"

He unclasped his military cloak, and was just preparing to leap to the ground, when he noticed the advancing figures stop. At first Deboissy imagined they had seen him, but he was speedily undeceived, and, with an exclamation of rage not loud but essentially deep, the French officer descried a *third* figure advancing—this time a man, whilst in the blue distance a fourth, apparently a follower of the new comer's could just be made out. Here then, were all the parties to this strange rendezvous.

Leaving Capitaine Philippe Deboissy still couchant on the fountain in a state of irresolution as to what he should do, let us now hear what Don Ignacio, for it was he who had so suddenly stopped Deboissy's declaration to the fair incognita, said to Estrella and her dark-browed duenna.

As Estrella had remarked when walking up towards the booth of the supposed escribano that morning, it was anything but a love assignation that she arranged with Don Ignacio de Segura. Unfortunately for poor Philippe, he was out of earshot of the conversation, else he would have been greatly edified, if not positively delighted, to overhear what little place love had in the conversation that ensued between the officer and the lady with the tresses of gold.

Don Ignacio was easily to be made out. His follower, he of the swarthy visage whom we have met before, stayed, discreetly, behind, whilst his master advanced to Estrella—for by that name we must for some time to come recognise the heroine of our history. Don Ignacio de Segura was in a violent state of rage, as was indeed shown in the first salutation he bestowed on Estrella—a salutation lacking all the courtesy of a Spanish gentleman, and which he rarely forgets, even in the presence of a foe. But Don Ignacio felt that he ran the risk of his head, and was correspondingly candid in what he said.

"Rash girl," he said, addressing Estrella, "do you know what you have done? To-day you have imperilled my life, and well-nigh brought the cause of Charles III. to ruin. *Malediction!* it is ever so with woman."

Estrella drew herself up haughtily, and in every gesture pride and resolution showed, adding the charm of strength to her beauty. She did not answer, but simply turned to her duenna, and said—

"I think, Juana, the señor knoweth not what he says."

Before Juana had time to answer, Don Ignacio broke in again angrily—

"But I do know what I say. Listen! Did you not—but, softly: even now I dare not speak without first ascertaining that we are alone."

"Alone, señor?" echoed the duena, hurriedly, and peering into the darkness around.

"Ay! it is uncertain," replied Don Ignacio, unsheathing his rapier, and walking down in the direction of poor Belisaire's tree. "At all events, we must not speak near the fountain, and our interview must be brief. Follow me."

Estrella and her attendant followed mechanically, for there was an earnestness about his speech that convinced even the haughty girl that something had gone wrong.

"*Pater noster qui es in celo!*" began Belisaire piously, as the trio paused directly underneath him,—"Ora pro nobis, peccavi—peste! I have forgotten every prayer and Ave I ever knew. Here's a very pretty turn of fortune. If they see me I shall be killed—I knew I should."

And Belisaire took a prolonged draught of cognac—in fact nearly finished the flask—a proceeding which precipitated matters (and something else) ere long.

"And now Señor?"

"You wrote me to day you wanted to see me?"

"I did."

"You did not write the note yourself?"

"It required no conjurer, señor, to tell that. It was penned by an escribano."

"It was not—I say!"

"What señor?" Estrella laughed scornfully. "Am I to discredit the evidence of my own eyes?"

"It was indeed the escribano," said Juana, "I know him well—his Salamanca cloak and vast sombrero."

"It was not the escribano, I say!" replied Don Ignacio fiercely; "you were juggled—cheated—and my life is even now in jeopardy by your indiscretion."

"(I wonder what they are talking about," soliloquized Belisaire above. "They don't seem to be making love.")

"Who was it then that wrote the letter?" enquired Estrella and her duena in the same breath.

"Who? By San Isidro none other than a cursed French officer who assumed the dress of the escribano for a foolish joke."

"Señor!"

"Ay! one of these gay butterflies of Louis XIV. who think their bright jackets and powdered wigs enough to put us poor Spaniards to the blush. Such an one it was to whom you in your simplicity told half our secret to-day. What will Manuel Borasco say when he hears it? *Per todos los santos*, it is enough to make a man swear!"

And Don Ignacio immediately justified his assertion. The ladies were obviously alarmed.

"And what makes it worse," continued Don Ignacio addressing Estrella pointedly, "is this, that the same officious fellow has taken a fancy to you—not encouraged I hope, for the honour of a Spanish lady—"

"—Señor!"

"Well,—he seems to be able to recognize you when he sees you. But to the point—he knows of this meeting, and has sworn to be here to-night."

"*Madre di dios!*" ejaculated the duena, involuntarily drawing her companion to her, "we must not tarry here. Let us begone."

"But this Frenchman's name, señor?" asked Estrella, agitated, restraining the duena's grasp.

"His name?—it is—ha! too late. Curses on the chance—that figure—see, there it comes—it is he!"

Muttering this, Don Ignacio threw himself into a posture of defence, and Estrella and the duena involuntarily retreated a pace, both intently watching the figure that bore down on them through the dull vapour.

"It is my master," muttered Belisaire in the tree. "He is sure to be killed." And he finished the uttermost drop of the *eau de vie*.

The fact is that our hero Deboissy got very tired of the Triton's company, and, with the facility of all hot-headed lovers, imagining the colloquy between Estrella and the masked stranger to be of the most amatory kind, he determined at once to end it and his doubts at the same time. Cocking his beaver, therefore, jauntily, and with hand upon hilt in case of accidents, Philippe coolly strode up to the knot under the beech tree and announced himself. Estrella had wished to know his name; by a coincidence the owner himself gave her the information.

"Senoras, be not alarmed I pray you, at my intrusion. My name is Philippe Deboissy, Captain of the Carabineers of His Sacred Majesty Louis XIV. of France; and if you wonder why I—"

"Back, señor, back, or by heaven I will run you through! Beware how you insult a Spanish lady!"

"O! be advised, señor, and depart," cried Estrella.

"Never, fair lady, never, by my mother's memory, till I have told you my love! As for you, Sir Mask, I have a sword as long and as keen as yours—"

"Here is to try it then," cried Don Ignacio, with a curse, as he rattled his blade against that of Deboissy, who had also drawn.

"Oh, oh!" murmured Belisaire, in an awful state of fright, "I am very much afraid my master will be slain." But he bethought himself not of coming down.

It was a strange sight to see those two cavaliers crossing swords in the dusky light, and a pair of silent women, clasping each other, standing by. The contest was close as it was vindictive—foot to foot, hilt to hilt. Both were masters of fence—if anything the Frenchman the better of the two.

"That for thee, false escribano!"

"Ha! how knowest thou that?"

"I know thee, false Frenchman—curses on that root!"

As he spoke, Don Ignacio stumbled heavily against a root of the tree, and, amidst the subdued screams of terror uttered by the women, Captain Philippe was about to make short shrift with his rival, when a new actor appeared like a phantom of evil on the field.

"Yield thy pretensions to this lady or die!" cried Deboissy with his sword at his adversary's throat.

"*Gloria in excelsis!*" murmured the anxious Belisaire above.

"O spare him señor, spare him!" cried Estrella.

What the issue would have been if left to the ordinary run of events, and Deboissy's own private judgment, we cannot tell; but just at that moment, the phantom we have alluded to appeared through the darkness, and with one bound bore Deboissy to the earth. It was the swarthy serving-man of Don Ignacio. Grinning a diabolical grin, he drew a long dagger, and with the utmost nonchalance, plunged it into the Frenchman's side. The blood welled forth in purple flood, and Estrella shrieked with horror. Don Ignacio rose and resumed his sword which had been struck from his grasp, and, to Belisaire in the branches, it appeared to be all over with his unfortunate master. And undoubtedly again, if it had been left to likelihood, so would Deboissy have then and there ended, for the tawny assassin kneeling on his breast, was a second time about to plunge his knife into Philippe's side, when—an unforeseen power from above prevented the fatal consummation. When we say above, we mean nothing higher than Belisaire's branch. In truth that eminent coward, on beholding his master's seemingly inevitable fate, had turned perfectly giddy with horror, not unmingled with brandy; and, brain reeling, and grasp trembling, the long and short of it is, Belisaire, adipose and inverted, came right down on the top of the devilish Moor with his uplifted knife. The effect was electrical.

"We are surrounded—'tis the patrol—" cried Don Ignacio taking at once to his heels—infringement number two of Spanish dignity that night.

"*Carajo!*" blasphemed his follower, imitating his master's example.

"Saved!" faintly whispered Estrella.

"The Holy Virgin direct me!" ejaculated Belisaire, recovering himself and making off into the darkness without any further perquisition for his master.

In a word, the bleeding carabineer was left to the care of Providence and the two ladies, one of whom was unwilling to have anything to do with him. That was, naturally, the duena.

"Let us go home, Estrella," she said, "for this is an evil night. I tremble to think of the consequences. What will your stern father say?"

"But he is dying."

"Let him die. He is our foe."

"Never, Juana—never! At most his is a venial crime. 'Twas no political venture brought him here. I shall not leave him. See, how the blood pours from his side. I will staunch it."

And so saying she knelt down in the grass and applied a scarf to the wound.—The duena was perplexed.

"This is folly, nina, utter folly—the soldiers will be here immediately. Let us begone!"

"And leave this poor youth to die! Never! Stay—I have a thought. Call Matteo."

"For what, nina?"

"Never mind that, but obey. I tell thee, call Matteo."

Reluctantly the duena disappeared in the direction whence they had come, as if in search of some one. Meanwhile the fair-haired Spaniard was kneeling beside

the wounded Frenchman, whom sense had forsaken for the time. She raised his head on her lap, and pressed her scarf against his heart; and ever and again she hurried over a prayer. (As we get on we shall find this girl is an *intriguante* of the first force, and a cool calculator of blood—so much to sack a town, so much to spoil a convoy. All which, however, will not prevent such displays of humanity as this present one.)

Presently Juana returned, followed by a man costumed like a goatherd, with the addition of a huge cloak.

"Raise this officer," said Estrella to the man whom she had previously called Matteo to Juana. And Matteo took him as he would lift a child.

"Now we shall go home."

"But, nina, Matteo cannot take this French officer to his quarters. It would be rash."

"Nor shall he; I shall have him carried with us home."

"But, what will your father—"

"He need not know. Will you be faithless to me?"

"Never, nina, never! But this is madness."

"And as for thee, Matteo," said Estrella, placing a little hand on his shoulder, "thou wilt keep my counsel?"

"*A muerte, senora!*"

CHAPTER VII.

LOVE OR STRATEGY?

BELISAIRE, like very many cowards who are matter of history, possessed a most excellent good heart. There was nothing he would not do to save his friend—save emperil himself. So when, as we have seen, he was delivered from duance by his unexpected drop into the disputes and upon the persons of the belligerents beneath, Monsieur Belisaire's first care was to save himself—which done, by favour of night, and a nimble pair of heels, he next bethought himself of his master. To return, sword in hand, to his rescue, was, of course, out of the question, and indeed Belisaire's notion was that a mere patrol would be quite insufficient for common security. He therefore rushed at an amazing pace to the headquarters of his regiment, situated fortunately not very far from that end of the Prado, and in a few disjointed sentences, gave the officer on duty to understand that Capitaine Philippe Deboissy had been set upon in the dark by a band of Spanish braves, and had been cruelly murdered, notwithstanding a brave resistance, in which he, Belisaire, had seconded (but alas! unavailingly), the efforts of his lamented master. Horror-struck, the officer to whom this sad tale was told immediately ordered out the guard with lanterns and flambeaux; despatched mounted messengers to carry the news to the various outposts; and in five minutes more, an army (nearly) was on the double-quick across the Prado.

It was an exciting scene. The torches flashed luridly against the dark foliage, and lit up below the faces and uniforms of the mixed soldiery who had turned out to share in the chase; the swart Andalusian—the shaggy Valencian—the French soldiers of Louis XIV.—and the civilian volunteers in their mantles and sombreros. No one on the field was more active than Don Ignacio de Segura. Hither, thither, he galloped—shouting, directing, commiserating his luckless brother officer. Belisaire guided the trackers to the place where the duel had taken place, and, sure enough, the light of the torches disclosed trampled grass; and a carabineer of Philippe's company, who rubbed his hand on the turf, drew it up with an ejaculation, and the bystanders saw it was wet with blood. But nobody was to be seen—patrols scoured every exit from the Prado without result; and after half an hour's fruitless search for the body of Deboissy, or any trace of his assassins, a general halt was called at the *fuelle d'oro*, to consider what next should be done. At that moment cries of "The King!"—"The King!" passed through the crowd, which opened involuntarily, and Philip V., in full dress, as if he had left a Court ball, rode into the middle of the group, followed by two mounted general-officers.

"How now, messieurs!" exclaimed the king angrily, addressing himself to Don Ignacio and a knot of Spanish officers who had been talking together. "What is this we hear? Is it then true that our brave soldier, Capitaine Philippe Deboissy has been basely slain within a gunshot of our palace walls. Speak, gentlemen, is this true?"

"I fear it is, your majesty," replied Don Ignacio, seeing the king looked to him for an answer—"but we cannot obtain any certain information. There has been

a struggle here, and there is blood on the grass, but the wounded man has disappeared, and also his antagonists."

"Antagonists! senor," broke in Philip with increasing warmth. "*Palsambleu!* as our royal grandfather would say, call them rather assassins. Men of honour cast not duels by night, nor in secret without witnesses. We have long seen that there was jealousy, senors, between you and your gallant French comrades; but by the Holy Virgin, an' ye cannot rest with rivalry in the field, ye shall not have it out in murder."

Murmured expressions of dissent rose from the Spaniards; which not even their respect for their sovereign could restrain.

"What value can we put in your profession of chivalry when we meet with such scenes as this?"—continued the king—"Tis not the first time that we have suspected foul play against our French allies. But we shall not rest till this affair be pricked to the bottom. To you, Don Ignacio de Segura, we entrust the further prosecution of the search, and on your allegiance we charge you to spare nought to bring this most foul murder to light."

"It shall be done, your majesty," said Don Ignacio.

"We hear of a servant of Capitaine Deboissy, who was present when his master was assailed, and we hear too that he fought stoutly in his defence. Let him stand forth."

With much fear and misgiving Belisaire was pushed into the royal presence. The king was evidently a little surprised at the unwarlike appearance of the squire, but he said nothing.

"Thou hast lost a good master, carabineer, and I a good officer; but thou hast the comfortable reflection that thou didst fight for him, though thou didst not save. Is it not so?"

"Y-yes—your most royal majesty—oh yes! I fought like—like a lion. But they were as ten to one."

"Ah, villains!" muttered Philip, as he threw a purse of gold to the trembling Belisaire.

"Oh, ho!" thought Don Ignacio to himself; "and thou wert the patrol? Very good, my fat friend, I shall mark thee for the future. But thou dost lie most courageously."

"Now, gentlemen," said the King, gathering up his reins and preparing to return. "We charge you again to quit Spain of this great disgrace. It will go badly with you if Monsieur le Marquis d'Harcourt has to tell my royal grandfather in his next despatch that Spanish jealousy has lost France one of her bravest sons. See to it."

And so saying the angry monarch rode quickly away. The search continued. Unavailing, of course. Let us now follow the fortunes of the wounded carabineer, whose disappearance Don Ignacio was quite as much puzzled to account for as any man on the Prado that night.

Matteo, the guerilla, took the lead with Philippe (still insensible) over his shoulder, and Estrella and Juana followed close behind. In this order they swiftly left the Prado, and skirted that suburb of the town by devious lanes and alleys, shrouded and walled by thick foliaged trees, and perfectly deserted by human foot. As they walked along, the assembly sounded shrilly in the air, then the drums beat the alarm, and by and by they could see the torches flashing like fire-flies in the direction of the palace; and the two women involuntarily drew a deep sigh of excitement as they paused momentarily to listen. They were pursued no doubt; and this contingency increased Juana's dissatisfaction at what she considered the extraordinary conduct of Estrella in bringing the wounded man with them. She even urged her to let Matteo relinquish his burden then and there.

"Let him die in the grass, Estrella, and we are an enemy the less. Ay! were it needful I could find it in my heart to speed his soul—thus!"

And she half unsheathed a delicate but exquisitely tempered poignard that was concealed in her breast. Estrella lifted her hand almost angrily and motioned the knife back to its place.

"No, no," she said, "that would be foolish revenge."

"It would at least be speedy and comprehensible," rejoined her companion; "and, nina, your conduct savours less of revenge than affection. Beware the glitter of the asp. Beware trifling with a foe."

"Peace, Juana! Love indeed—what if I hate this silly gallant with a deadly hate?"

"And then?"

"What if I repay craft with craft—duplicity with itself. Say, my old nurse, am I fair—as women are spoken of as fair?"

"None more beautiful than thee, nina, pace the usurper's halls yonder. But why?"

"Why dost thou, wise sibyl of our hills, ask me the question! What did this man seek me for to-night? Thinkest thou he cares not for my smile?"

"Ah—ah—thou wilt make him fancy that thou lovest him?"

"Yes!"

"—And drag the secrets of his party from him?"

"Ay! Juana—twist him into a traitor, like that miserable Don Ignacio—"

"Hush, nina, this is not well."

"We are alone. Then, when he has sold himself to me, body and soul—then, Juana—"

"His death! And yet I thought thou hadst no mind to do him an injury! Now I know that Borasco has not read thee wrongly. Thou art a brave girl! But swear to me such is thy purpose."

Estrella turned her magnificent eyes up to the heavens, and said solemnly,

"I swear it!"

"Ay!" muttered Juana, giving in with a doubt, "but thou art a strange girl. I fear this will end in no good."

"Besides," added Estrella, as if to smooth away the last objections of her duenna, "I mistrust Don Ignacio. A traitor can be doubly a traitor. Here, I have my counterfoil. Ha! trust me, I have not lived in the wilds for nought."

By this time they had reached a crumbling wall, over which drooped masses of tree-foliage. The moon had some time risen over the horizon, and lit up in soft splendour the antique walls and terraced grounds of an old mansion—such as a hidealgo of Philip the Second's time might have built himself. But it had long passed from the occupancy of rank and wealth, and up till a few minutes previous to the time of which we write, it had for many years stood untenanted, wrinkling into decay.

But one evening, the owner, a merchant of Madrid, received an offer from a dark-browed stranger, representing himself to be a landholder near the Portuguese frontier, who wished his daughter to see a little of court and city life; and the house was let. Little external change resulted from this transaction. But had any one for the next few days had secret access to the interior, he would have seen strange men prowling mysteriously about; tapping the wainscoting; reading from old papers, and applying their information to the elucidation of some secret; and had our imaginary beholder been shrewd to link, and shrewd to listen, he would have known that the tenant was the terrible robber-chief Manuel Borasco—that he had certain information about the facilities offered to his schemes by subterranean passages, and hiding nooks in this very house; and that in fine, it had been determined to work out in Estrella's abode, the ruin of Philip V.

Into this house—gaunt, dark, echoing—went Estrella and her duenna, followed by the bandit and his almost exanimate load.

(To be continued.)

HAND AND GLOVE.

A CITY NOVELET.

BY L. H. F. DU TERREAUX.

CHAPTER VI.

PERSON OR PERSONS UNKNOWN.

A coroner's jury sits near Shad Thames. Shad Thames is on the confines of the Borough, and has a damp and sloppy consciousness of being there and of being fit for no other place on the habitable globe. Poverty and filth lie cheek by jowl with the musty, mouldy, greasy, coal, tarry means by which wealth and comfort are created: on the wharves, in the ships and barges; amid the iron, wood, casks and warehouses; in the pools of oil and pitch which reflect the hues of the rainbow. Heavy carts that grind the hard stones under their harder wheels; lumbering barges that come grimly to the piers and depart grimly thence; long bars of metal that fall with clang and jar one on the other, as they are thrown from the wagons or the ships; dirty, uncouth natures that survey, arrange, labour in all this; show the commercial element strongly tinged with dirt. Springing out of the hardness and meanness and comfortlessness of all around, the ingredients of Riches could not better testify to the truth of the parable of old, or prove their incongruity with the Kingdom of Heaven.

A coroner's jury sits in the Borough near Shad Thames. A public house with a long room upstairs in which the Lumpers' Providence Club was instituted seventeen hundred and something for the purpose of enabling provident lumpers to pay in the sum of one and threepence a week, refunded (minus club expenses) in such severe cases as death, burial, sickness, Christmas or twins—receives the twelve intelligent men headed by the coroner and heralded by the beadle. A mighty man is the beadle, feared in Shad Thames by the ungrown lumpers and immature wharfingers of the gutter: a pompous man is he in the pride of beadlehood, and oblivious of the time when even beadles must put off the cocked hat of mortality and exchange the staff for a palmier sceptre. The grandeur of the age, evinced in love of purple and fine linen to shame the lilies, loses nothing at the hands of that great man, but is as worthily sustained by him as it is by his compeer in beadedom, regnant in the land, whose dwelling overlooks St. James's Park and the Duke of York's Column.

Buttoned-up and imperturbable at the presence of death in an adjoining room, the coroner marshals his twelve intelligent. Among the twelve are the usual victims, whose business suffers by their absence an interruption calculated to permeate their future transactions and lead to bankruptcy if not ruin. There is the unintelligent foreigner, who suddenly discovers that fourteen years' residence in this country has failed to render him acquainted with the simplest forms of the language, or to make him in the least degree fit for the onerous duties of an inquest. There is the man who is hopelessly deaf, and the man (not singular among the twelve) who is hopelessly stupid. There is also the man whose perverseness in not attending when summoned is somewhat extenuated by the discovery that he has been dead for three years; but the active beadle is at hand and the perverse one's place is supplied. And the coroner, having heard various pleas of inability and treated them with calm disdain, opens the proceedings.

Outside, there is a disposition on the part of the general public, foiled in its desire to enter the house and take part in the proceedings, to glue its face to the window-panes, and leave there damp impressions of its nose. A bar-parlour round the corner, in which the jury is not sitting, is the favourite attraction for the nose of the outside public, as the second floor is rather high. It needs all the ubiquity of the beadle and the exertion of several "traps" from the police office to keep off provident and indignant lumpers, who insist on their right, as members, to enter their club-room. Exception is made in favour of the chairman of the Lumpers' Providence and the treasurer; but the room upstairs is found incapable of containing all the members, and the circumstance chafes them. There are loud threats about Shad Thames of withdrawing subscriptions and resigning, and several resolutions are carried concerning the advisability of bringing to account at the next meeting the chairman and treasurer, who are regarded with envy from being so favoured, and are branded with treachery to the club. But amid the discontent, ready way is made for arriving witnesses; and when Mr. Throgmorton appears with official retainers in cabs, and when Mr. Orpwood drives up in spotless apparel and the highest-wheeled gig and the highest-stepping mare, a murmur of interest softens the lumper breast, and even produces consideration in favour of Mr. Orpwood's groom, as he leads away the highest-stepping mare to browse in imagination upon the timber logs and barrels.

Mr. Throgmorton's prevalent respectability is tinged with a sadness suitable to the occasion. He is dressed in mourning of the most glossy sheen. His black coat and trousers seem to catch what little light there is in that region, and send off, as from a glassy surface, little rays of light, analogous to the little rays of moral light emitted from his smooth discourse. Before the proceedings have commenced, he encounters James Orpwood.

"James," says Mr. Throgmorton, "this is a sad business."

Orpwood agrees that it is—uncommonly.

"We are told, and I have often impressed the truth on that poor young man," says Mr. Throgmorton, "that in the midst of life we are in death. Could we only foresee these things, more appropriately would I have striven to impress upon him that in the midst of life we are in Murder."

Mr. Orpwood thinks that is a rather uncomfortable reflection.

"It is uncomfortable," Mr. Throgmorton assents, "but oh, how true! And yet who shall say any dispensation is uncomfortable, after all? To the eye of faith all things are rightly ordered: in the eye of faith even murder comes ordained. Uncomfortable, as you remark, it may be to the erring body; but oh, how comforting to the soul! It is a belief," Mr. Throgmorton meekly adds, "which I have always endeavoured to sustain in the office and elsewhere—especially elsewhere. It is a living creed."

Orpwood remarks that Mr. Throgmorton has adopted mourning.

"True," answers Throgmorton, "I have assumed a fitting garb in memory of that poor young man. It is but little to put one's self in black, but I do it willingly. I would I could wear it not only in my dress but on my body—this perishable body. If it were not attainable by means which would throw aspersion on the motive," says Mr. Throgmorton, "I would place in mourning this grey head. I would dye my hair."

Orpwood agrees with the motive, but fears the effect as judged by other fellows.

"Let us wear mourning, James," resumes Mr. Throgmorton, "in our minds on this sad day. Let not only our coats be black and trousers, but also our feelings. Yet not our hearts, James, not our hearts. We will keep them pure and white, now and forevermore, even to the end."

With the air of blessing a sinful world, he carries away the gloss of his clothes and the gloss of his shining head and shining benevolence to the other end of the room. Mr. Orpwood, too polite to make fun of him in his presence, contents himself with remarking to one of the disciples who has arrived, that the old fellow is the rarest institution going, something between a Lord Chancellor and an Old Man's Christian Association.

The proceedings have commenced: intelligent twelve empanelled, witnesses called and sworn. Witnesses of uncertain profession and undeveloped training prove to having found the body of the deceased lying below a pier on the mud of the river with marks round the throat and wounds on the head. They found it at low tide: it was lying in the mud so that the tide on rising must have reached it. At what time did they find it? At a quarter past four o'clock in the morning. Was there anything on the person of the deceased? Yes, there was a crumpled letter with his full address on the direction, franked by Lord Liverpool; and there were a guinea and two half-crowns in his trousers pocket. Letter produced: Mr. Martin Waddyhouse, care of John Throgmorton Esq. Finch Lane London: no interior page, simply a covering. Witnesses identify the body.

One of the witnesses announces himself as a Jerquer. Being asked by an intelligent one out of the intelligent twelve, what a Jerquer is, answers "Of the Customs, to be sure," with an air which crushes the intelligent one, who is sneered at by the intelligent eleven.

A medical man called. Has examined deceased. Holds no doubt on the subject of violence. Believes deceased met with death from compression of the thorax in conjunction with the bruises on the head. Said bruises apparently resulted from heavy blows administered with a blunt weapon of lead or iron: probably with a life-preserver. Deceased could not so have maltreated himself.

There is a murmur of interest—that low suppressed hum which Tragedy evokes from the throat of excitement-loving humanity whether in court or theatre—as the medical man's evidence conforms with the half-felt desire of the audience that the calamity should be traced to murder. Call Mr. Throgmorton.

Mr. Throgmorton is favourably received by all: his appearance is that of beaming yet chastened benevolence called before a jury of fellow-mortals to testify to the sins of humanity. There is no unctuousness in his way of delivering evidence: only grief: subdued grief. How can Murder walk the earth with such a man upon it? If Finch Lane had only been situated in one of the Cities of the Plain, surely that shining head would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah!

He knew the poor young man, gentlemen, on earth: he hopes to continue the acquaintance under happier circumstances. An excellent young man, a most trustworthy character, so far as Mr. Throgmorton could judge. He would have trusted him with untold amount—in either gold, notes or securities. In fact he was trusted with an amount—not untold, no; counted and entered in the office books as seven hundred and fifty-five pounds eight and fourpence in cheques, drafts and gold—which he was told to deposit in the bank on the day he was last seen. The next day he

did not appear at the office, but a letter from him intimated that he was ill with bronchitis. The evening of that day it appears he dined with several witnesses present, after which he was found . . . as you know, gentlemen; as alas! you know.

"And if I could have averted that awful fate from my poor clerk," says Mr. Throgmorton with tears in his eyes, "if I could have preserved him at the individual inconvenience of being murdered myself, I would gladly have done so, with my present spiritual prospects before me. Or could I have foreseen this, gentlemen, I would have taken upon myself the responsibility of warning him in time and seeing him insured in my own office. I do not usually do business in Lives myself; I confine myself to Marine; but on such an occasion I would willingly have accepted him and paid the policy with my own hands to his eminently worthy family."

A hum of admiration goes through the room at Mr. Throgmorton's benevolence; and the chairman of the Lumpers' Providence remarks to the treasurer, what a Lumper that there genl'mn would make!

Mr. James Orpwood deposes. Mr. James Orpwood, following close on the late respectable witness, contrasts with him in bearing to his own disadvantage. It is rarely than Manner fails, but Manner at an inquest requires perhaps to be mitigated; or at all events the interested public about the door would have it so. So as Manner, ringed, shaven and scented (laced too, perchance: who knows—George being prince?) steps up to give evidence, public opinion goes forth sotto voce that "he takes it easy, don't he? Not like the old genl'mn, he ain't." But Mr. James Orpwood, being well-bred, is above public opinion, and says so in his handsome smile.

His evidence is clear. He saw deceased last of all those present: indeed, deceased dined at his house, certain witnesses in the room being of the party. Did deceased appear to have anything on his mind? No, should say not: deceased had more on his head. Had been taking wine. He was not to say tipsy, but had been taking wine, as fellows often do. Mr. Orpwood was not very intimate with deceased, but had met him out and knew him well enough. He knows many men he would ask to dine, without being intimate with them, of course, and is politely surprised with the coroner for asking such a question. Most men knew men well enough to dine, but are not necessarily intimate with the men.

"Did any words—amounting to a dispute, that is to say—take place over your wine, sir?" asks the coroner.

"Between the deceased and any man?" returns Orpwood. "No: I can't say they did. Mr. Owles here and he had a bit of a tiff, about—What was it, Owles?"

Mr. Owles in sudden fright at being charged with the murder, hastily replies, "Good ged, no, nothing at all—my dear fellow, what do you mean? Nothing of the sort—it was simply a matter of opinion involving a wager, nothing more: was it, Chafferson?"

Chafferson assents, "Nothing more;" the coroner appears satisfied, and Owles breathes again. Orpwood, pressed to say how he parted with deceased, candidly confesses he does not remember, having wine. He and deceased and the other witnesses got involved with the watch, and he drove home, and imagined at the time deceased was going home too; but he can assert nothing positively.

A trap from Bow Street mentally resolves to keep his eye on Mr. Orpwood, for in his (the trap's) opinion that gentleman knows more than he is telling. Mr. Orpwood retires, and the disciples give their testimony. It is of little importance, and leads to nothing. The intelligent twelve, having heard, are now to speak.

"Gentlemen, are you agreed upon your verdict?"

They are. Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown.

"Gentlemen, you are released."

Respectability drives away, shedding peace over London Bridge and carrying plenteousness into the City. Manner drives away on the high wheels and behind the high-stepping mare, to lunch with the disciples and talk over this unpleasant affair, and speculate on the gaily beggar's being found out. Intelligent twelve walk away and become the heroes of their counters for days to come. Tag-rag loiters about, having nowhere particular to drive or walk to; and the body is left alone.

There he shall lie until one or two broken-hearted ones come to carry him weeping to a country grave. After that he shall lie, oblivious of weepers or cursers,

of friends or foes, of avenging justice or the law's delay, till the Trumpet blows for his murderer and him. Meanwhile the world goes round, though assassins walk it. How should one soul's flight disturb it, further than by the depth of a spade in a still church-yard?

CHAPTER VII.

MUGGIS EMPORIUM.

In one of the narrow-streets (it does not matter which) lying between London Wall and Skinner-street, there stood, propped up by sundry devices to keep it from collapsing against its neighbour on the opposite side of the way, the house, shop, establishment and general place of business of Samulenary Mugg. At first sight it would have been hard for the wayside philosopher or the casual stroller with an enquiring turn of mind, who should be curious on the subject of Mr. Mugg's business, to discover its precise nature. The shop was a dingy one, and essentially a dark one: it seemed to be lighted on no principle save perhaps the absence of all illuminating agency whatever; for the small window in the front was obscured by the cobwebs of ages in conjunction with sundry appeals to the public, chiefly conveyed through the medium of poetry in pen and ink, to favour the establishment of Mugg with their patronage. Over the narrow doorway stood in faded letters the painted name of S. MUGG; and over the window the slightly ungrammatical designation of MUGGIS EMPORIUM. Sundry references to the nature of the Emporium appeared, on closer examination, in the window; and the clearest definition was made manifest in a kind of epic, presumed to be written by Mr. Mugg himself, which was pasted on a board and hung from a nail in one of the lintels of the door; running thus:—

If you have rags or bones to sell,
Or empty bottles or rubbish you will do well,
Either paper or dripping or else old clothes,
Or whatever usually out to the asphalt goes,
Don't throw it away but bring it steady,
To S. Mugg and get your money.
I buy all you have got and don't want,
And this you'll find a very good chance.
For rags and bones you will get more for em,
Than ever was given at Muggsis Emporium.

A companion inducement to this (which was looked upon in the neighbourhood as a lofty flight of genius and a beautiful adaptation of art to the requirements of commercial principles) hung on another board from another nail, and represented allegorically the effect of steady patronage of Mr. Mugg. It was a coloured picture in two parts: the left side of the picture representing a very emaciated woman in rags carrying into Muggsis Emporium a bundle out of which protruded a flat iron and a bedroom candlestick; and the right side representing the same woman in an advanced stage of corpulence and dressed in the most brilliant costume, carrying a large basketful of various butcheries and groceries, with a young man wheeling behind her a grand piano in a wheelbarrow, while Muggsis Emporium stood in the background with Mr. Mugg at the door benevolently contemplating the scene. Further elucidation of the picture was to be found in the soliloquies of the woman, which proceeded in the form of a balloon out of her mouth, and represented her expressing in the first instance her determination to seek Muggsis Emporium, and in the second her satisfaction at having transacted business there.

But inside the Emporium itself the real nature of Mr. Mugg's enterprise showed itself in a cardboard announcement that S. Mugg was a Charitarians' Outfitter, and that there were Wardrobes Supplied. Smaller cards, kept in Mr. Mugg's private possession, informed parties intending to start in business, either singly or with families, and requiring British or foreign outfits, that S. Mugg had in stock the largest and most varied assortment of distressed, destitute, or other clothing; Indian garments warranted warm for winter; attire suitable for shipwrecked mariners or injured miners; sketches in coloured chalks for poor artists; deaf and dumb cards; blind Bibles containing only the well-known chapters; &c., &c. On the other side S. Mugg announced himself as an agent for the formation of mendicant partnerships and the supplier of families at reasonable terms, and advised parties with no arms or legs to apply to him with the view of being liberally dealt with. The appearance of the Emporium bore out the character ascribed to it by the presiding S. Mugg. It was essentially a temple of poverty represented by the most decayed clothing that could be supposed to exist without tumbling to

pieces and crumbling into dust. Over these emblems of his trade reigned Samulenary Mugg, a sharp, thin wizen old man with no hair on his head and no beard or whisker on his face and no eyelashes to his eyes. Analytical speculators on the origin of Mr. Mugg's baptismal name contented themselves with supposing it to have been Samuel Henry, abbreviated for unknown charitable objects. This was a mere conjecture on the part of the interested, for nobody had ever asked Samulenary how he came by it.

Samulenary Mugg stood in Muggs's Emporium behind a dark counter and subsiding into a background of the dark wardrobes supplied to mendicants. With his white hairless head and his hairless face and eyes he presented so great a relief to the obscurity of his surroundings that he might fancifully have been taken for a picture by some Old Master, in which age and dust had darkened the canvas without impairing the principal figure on it. To the foreground of this ugly picture there entered, as the dusk of evening without was deepening the dusk of Muggs's Emporium within, a slouching muffled figure, that gave the master of the shop a sullen Good evening.

"Who's that—what do you want—who is it?" asked Mugg, sharply prying over the counter into his visitor's face.

The newcomer threw back a cloak he wore and showed the face behind it.

"Ho, you're Goodge, are you?" said old Mugg.

"Hush! Mr. Mugg," returned the other: "I—I don't want you to mention names at present. I would rather you didn't, if you please, or that you called me something else. For reasons, suppose you call me—say, Walkinshaw."

"Ho, Walkinshaw," replied Mugg. "Very well: Walkinshaw. I've no objection to Walkinshaw."

"Could I speak with you, Mr. Mugg? I've something private I should like to say, if convenient, which I would rather not say in an open place. For reasons, of course."

"Very well, Walkinshaw, come in here."

Stepping out of his dingy background Mugg dissolved the picture of the Old Master, and led the way into a darker and dingier anteroom behind the shop. The man Goodge followed; and it was noticeable that as he did so he looked fearfully round, as though nervously distrusting pursuit.

In the back room he drew the old man into a corner, and said, "The fact is, Mr. Mugg, and to begin with that first, I want a make-up."

"Ho, you want an outfit, do you?" retorted Mugg. "And what sort of an outfit do you want? You're not going into the Charitarian line yourself, are you? You're rather too surly for a Charitarian, you are."

"Do you mean a beggar?"

"Well, something in that way. Whatever you please to call it. We prefer calling 'em Charitarians here, as less hurtful to the feelings. And what is your little game, Mr. Walkinshaw, if I might be so bold as ask?"

The other surlily replied that he wished to keep himself dark, being in debt.

"Ha, and maybe for something else than debt. You don't look as though debt would bother you. Why, you've got gold about you now," the sharp old man replied.

Goodge started and flushed. "How do you know that, you—"

"I heard the rattle of sovereigns or guineas in your pocket, friend Walkinshaw. I know the sound of gold, bless you, fast enough. I might even guess how much you had now if a trifling wager was staked. Within half a dozen pounds."

"Never mind that," interposed the other hastily. "Come on to your outfit."

"Well then, what is it to be? Are you a distressed operative from the North, or have you suffered from an explosion in Cornwall, with a picture of the accident? You are rather old for an orphan, and not serious-looking enough for a Christian Friend. If you had had your leg amputated now, I've a beautiful diseased one with knee-joints easy to fix on and show here: it's as thin as a lath with a sore at the ankle. You're not genteel enough for clean linen and black gloves rather worn at the fingers; and the public prefers a taller man for that, and one as is blind. I tell you what, a discharged soldier with a blameless character and his mother's Testament would suit you; for now that peace is to be established it's more natural. You can read your mother's Testament at Charing Cross."

"I don't want to beg, I tell you: I want a safe hiding dress," exclaimed Goodge petulantly.

"Ho, do you? Very well; then I should recommend a brazier, because you can smudge your face. Either that or a sweep, but braziers attracts less notice. But mark you, I won't be answerable for this, if you've been at anything wrong and got yourself into trouble with the police. You're not going to compromise me; and sure as ever I find out you're wanted, mind, for anything worse than debt or larking, out I walk to Bow Street and blow upon you straight, and so I tell you. Now, come up here."

With this caution the old man led his customer up a creaking flight of stairs into a store-room, and the metamorphosis was effected. Under the artistic hand of Mugg, the ex-clerk was converted into a soiled and smudgy artisan of unsavoury-looking appearance, such as an indifferent promenade may pass by dozens in any odd street of London.

This being done, the new-made mechanic asked his costumier if his lodgers were in, and if he could see them. Mugg replied that one of his lodgers was in, namely the female one, and that he could see her, and ushered the way up more creaking stairs to a creaking attic at the top of the house.

"There you are, and you know the way," said the old man, pausing at the stairtop. "You don't want me p'raps, and my mind ain't the best. I shall sit on the top step here and wait till I've enough to take me down again, and you can see me on your way out."

Leaving him there, sitting with his head against a middle distance of dark banister, and his shadow on a background of dark lobby and his knees foreshortened up to his white face, and he looking so much like a decayed picture that he might have been catalogued as "No. 985: An Old Seoundrel: Teniers"—Goodge opened the door indicated, and went in. Seated before a small fire in the grate (the evening was chilly), with her head drooping over it, was the figure of a woman, which started and looked round over its shoulder at the opening of the door.

"What do you want? He's not in," said the woman. Goodge walked up to her. "Bah, nonsense," he gruffly said; "don't tell me he's not in, Sally."

She started, and peered into his face. As she brought her own into the light, there revealed itself on her cheek the discoloured mark of a bruise. She raised her hand as though to hide it. "Is it you, dear?" she said. "I did not know you."

"You are mighty affectionate with your Dear," returned her ungracious brother. "It used to be 'Simon' and 'you Simon' before you married, and only 'brother' when you were softening. You appear to be softening now."

She was at no time a handsome girl, and in the old days she had been hard of feature and manner; but her brother's remark was so far true now, in that the hard look was gone, and her face seemed toned with suffering and her eyes seemed used to tears. Not the first woman's nature, hers, whose scornfulness has been broken on the wheel in the dungeon of a marriage home.

"You are cruel with me, Simon, and always were: maybe I deserve it, for I usedn't to think much about being kind to you. I have thought about it a great deal lately, Simon, and am sorry for not having been a better sister."

Her brother looked at her in extremity of surprise. Again shading her cheek and turning her head towards the grate, she went on.

"There has been little love between us, Simon, all our lives, or little show of it at least. If I had done my duty by you better, I don't know but what even a sister's influence might have kept you straighter; but I was hard upon your failings, and perhaps drove you into what I might have kept you out of, by being gentler myself. I have thought about this, too, and would give my past and future life to repair it. Perhaps I can do something towards repairing it: will you let me try, brother dear?"

From the stare he fixed upon her, he was plainly at sea as regarded her meaning. "Why what the mischief are you talking about?" he wonderingly asked.

"If you would love me more, and let me love you more God knows I feel my need of love—now!"

There was a desolate emphasis in "now," that spoke more than her tears or the bruise on her cheek.

"Silence!" retorted her brother with an oath. "You have had your jaw; let me have mine. Where's your husband?"

If he had cast about for the best means of rousing her out of that to him incomprehensible humour of hers, he could not have hit upon a more effectual one

than by his coarseness. Instantly she relapsed into a coldness which resembled her former nature, and replied she neither knew nor cared. She had hardly said it when the door opened and Whiffler entered.

He had apparently been drinking—apparently, for the symptoms of drunkenness never showed stronger upon him than by heightening the yellowness of his complexion and making yet more gingery his gingery eyebrows and hair. Greeting his brother-in-law merely with a nod, he turned to his wife.

"Affectionate partner," he said, "as your brother and me will probably require to have a bit of a talk together, you had better tramp, my dear, and convey your loveable body into the other room. Why, what's this?" he suddenly exclaimed, as his eye caught a book lying on the ground, "What"—with an oath—"is this?"

She snatched it from him, as he stooped to pick it up. "It is a Bible," she coldly said.

"Oh, a Bible, eh? And you have been reading it? The Bible's a good book, I believe, and teaches wives their duty towards their husbands: very well. But there are things it don't teach, my dear. It don't teach that a husband sometimes kills a wife who does not mind her duty. It don't teach that, does it?"

"No," she replied, looking steadily at him; "no."

"No. But if there were any addition to be made to it in these days, it should. If a Gospel, or an Epistle, or an Apostle, or whatever it is called, could be added to it now, it should teach that, and an example should be given of the teaching being carried out; and mayhap, the example should be yours and mine, my dear. Now, pack!"

She remained standing immovable before him. "I will not go," she answered, "unless you ask me civilly. I won't be spoken to in that manner."

"Oh, you won't?" He calmly walked to the grate, and stuck a blunt poker between the bars into the glowing coals.

"You have done that before," she said coolly. "You may do more than burn my hands or my forehead; you may press that red hot into my bosom; but I will not go."

Her husband made no reply, but addressing himself to Goodge asked him when he had come, and what he had been doing that day. In five or six minutes the fire-iron was hot.

"Now," he said, withdrawing it from the bars, "gentlest of wives, will you honour and obey by getting out of this?"

She did not speak, but kept her scornful gaze upon him. He advanced to her with the red iron held before him.

"Good heavens, man, drop that infernal thing! Put it down, I say, you scoundrel!" shouted Goodge springing at him with a curse. "You don't mean to say you would kill the girl? Down with it; and you, Sally, go to your room, there's a good wench, for—for my sake."

She only replied, "I will do it for you, Simon, but I never would for that, and he knows it." And left the room.

When she was gone, her husband replaced the poker, and received the remonstrance of his brother-in-law with a yellow smile. "You are sensitive, my dear Goodge," he replied; "you wouldn't burn a fellow-creature, of course not. Perhaps you wouldn't murder a fellow-creature under more pressing circumstances?"

The other scowled. "Enough of meddling insolence, or there are more unlikely chances than that, I would murder a fellow-creature who can't hold his tongue."

His brother-in-law merely laughed smoothly, and eyed him out of the corner of his eyes, with the expression of a complacent cat who is menaced by a terrier for whom she feels herself to be more than a match.

"Tell me Whiffler"—Goodge began.

"Excuse me: I have taken the precaution—or the idea—to change that name, and am generally respectfully mentioned by my friends as Mr. Wire."

"Well, Wire, then: it's as bad as any other and no worse. When do you return to the gang in France?"

"As soon as this peace is proclaimed, that there is so much talk about. If Cornwallis manages to get round Bonaparte at Amiens, I shall wonder; but if Bonaparte gets round him it will be tantamount to the same thing. Anyhow let 'em make peace between 'em somehow, and then you will see my men at Cherbourg do a better trade than ever in running the juicy across to the Isle of Wight. The fact is, that unless peace is made, I can't get back easily; for France is too hot for Englishmen, so long as Bonaparte is First Consul."

"Why did you leave?" asked Goodge moodily. "When you started to go there it was understood you were to remain on the station altogether. That was only in the spring, and this is November."

"Ah," returned Wire. "It was spring, was it, when that inquest was held? So it was. It doesn't seem long since, does it? It can't have seemed long to you, eh?"

"It seems years and years," fiercely answered Goodge. "You know how long time seems to a man hiding. Understand me, I don't regret any circumstance connected with it. I would go through it all again to-morrow if need be—not out of hate of him but out of hate of his employer. He was faithful to that man, and I killed him for it; so I would kill wife, son and daughter, before his eyes, and end by killing him himself."

His passion was the more fearful that it was delivered in a suppressed tone, and was ever accompanied, as he clenched his fist and ground his teeth, with that nervous turn of the head and glance over the shoulder which spoke of an abiding suspicion.

"Yes," replied Wire, poking at the grate. "But I don't care for murdering people, myself. You get yourself under the law, and I know the unpleasantness of that, having been brought up to it. So my motto is, don't murder. Why murder? Revenge, says you; or gain, says you. Sometimes necessity, says you. Now all these pleas I may or may not admit: to the extent of violently and criminally assaulting and battering the complainant I do not admit them. For why? Because your revenge or your gain, or what not, may be had at a cheaper rate and by running less risk of law and Tyburn. You needn't murder the complainant in this case, my friend," continued Mr. Wire with the air of bantering a witness, "you may ruin him."

"I'd do both," the other muttered.

"I wouldn't," cheerfully responded Wire, "I wouldn't. I'd ruin him in a friendly way; but nothing more."

"You promised to help me to do that."

"As far as mild measures are concerned, and in the event of Providence proving propitious. Three p's, my friend, which really very seldom come together in this neglected world."

"You are one with me, mind you," Goodge continued, "if anything turns up."

"I am one with you if anything leading to ruin turns up, but not leading to murder. I keep clear of that," Wire replied.

"Well, so far you and me are agreed?"

"Certainly, my friend, certainly."

"We are Hand and Glove in the business," said Goodge.

"We are," returned Wire, "Hand and Glove. Even with the disadvantage of not knowing which is the Hand and which the Glove, I can so far agree to that."

Giving him his palm on this, Wire now proposed that his brother-in-law should take his leave. Descending the dark stairs, darker in the deepening evening, he took him through Muggis Emporium, where Mr. Mugg was engaged in furnishing an indigent mechanic with three orphan daughters in unnaturally clean pinafores; and they issued out to the street. In the chill leaden fog, November was asserting its presence and exacting its due.

"I have been creeping from hole to corner and pillar to post," whispered Goodge to his brother-in-law, "month after month, through all seasons and in all dodges and disguises, until I'm fairly sick of it. I'd almost as soon give myself up, I swear. If it was possible to get out of London, I'd go; but I can't. There's something, Wire, that keeps me back, that says Hold on and wait, and that has prevented me a hundred times when I had it in my mind to escape. And I must hold on, and must wait, let come what may."

Mr. Wire, like the presiding genius of the yellow fog, watched him in the mist grow indistinct and disappear; and then he turned into the Emporium and disappeared himself. "I shall now go," said Mr. Wire to himself, "and settle accounts with my wife. There is nothing freshens a man's mind so much as having to correct the little failings of a cantankerous wife." And five minutes afterwards a low wailing proved Mr. Wire was freshening his mind.

Meanwhile the slouching figure moved away, a dirty speck in the mist. What chance is it that regulates a meeting in the street, such as happens every day in our lives? Were it not something to interest one, perched say on a steeple, or in a balloon, or gifted with the clairvoyant's power, to watch the progress of two acquaintances from opposite points of the compass,

until they casually meet? The startings, stoppings, turnings back, standings at crossings, strollings down streets, windings this way and that way, and always drawn together until they are nose to nose? If Hermes is the god of travellers, who is the deity that manages the meetings in the street?

It would have been nothing out of the ordinary course of events, if the slouching figure had come upon his enemy, Mr. Throgmorton. But he came upon nothing more remarkable than a man and woman standing under a doorway near one of the now west-central squares; and yet as he passed them, he gave a start.

"It is his servant," thought Goodge; "I have seen her often at his house; but who is the man? He looks a gentleman, too. Where have I seen that face?"

He evidently was a gentleman, and even expressed it in a little burlesque of gallantry as he raised the woman's hand to his lips, flourished his hat, bowed at parting, and laughingly strolled away. The mode of his doing this was exaggerated, but there was a gentlemanly ease in it all. "Where," thought Goodge, peering into a handsome face which passed him in the fog, "have I seen that fellow before?"

CHAPTER VIII.

COMMERCIAL AND BENEFICENT.

All this time, as indeed at all times, Commerce had been thriving immensely in the city. Typified in its way by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, whose end and aim in the opinion of the facetious vulgar is to consume banquets in Guildhall whether the outside country feeds or starves, Commerce sat on a throne of stocks and shares and every form of stamped and printed paper, and banqueted also. Did peace with dove and olive-branch assist Britannia (by charter) to rule the waves, Commerce fed on dove and olive-branch, and fattened on that allegorical dish of fowl and greens. Did war ravage this and every other land on earth, Commerce showed its capacity for carrion, and thrived on that. Now and then certainly, Nature, who is occasionally low-bred enough to be tempted to get east of Temple Bar, would rebel against this gorging propensity of Commerce to fatten on all things, and would put in force that wholesome course of hers that follows on gluttony. Then would the throes of sickness shake Commerce to her centre, and much of the unwholesome gorging would cease, the unwholesomeness be cast out, and only the solid food remain. It was a healthy process this, but a violent and fearful one, and the spasms of Commerce in the City would shake the whole earth. Yet they came as regularly as the seasons, or as death after life, or as punishment after sin; they were to be predicted as certainly as the snow; you could say of them, "in six months—or in four or two months—they will be here." Still Commerce gorged, and still the spasms came; and still before and after the severe anguish, hundreds of men and women would go nightly on bended knees and pray God to avert the evil, while hundreds impotently cursed Him for the ruin which it brought.

A spasm—known elsewhere than in City Articles as a Panic—was threatening Commerce now. She had been more gluttonous than ever over the war, and had swelled herself out of all proportion. True the country was never so poor, bread never so high, paupers never so plentiful. Proclamations of famine and distress had gone forth; the starving masses had been exhorted by poster and placard to be economical; bakers were prohibited to sell bread less than four and twenty hours stale, that it might go its furthest; a Brown Bread Bill had been passed; noble lords and ladies agreed to give up the luxury of pies. Corn had been going up, up, up, year after year, and the City, like the cornfields, might well have been supposed to be in a terrible state. So it was, according to the city articles: in an indescribably terrible state, money being unparalelledly tight. But whether the tightness of money is inseparable from its rightness, as in the "right little, tight little island" of the song, the city articles do not aver; yet no less is it certain that the tightness of general money (say in the market) seldom extends to individual pounds shillings and pence spent out of civic boundaries. Thus private bustling little gentlemen had thrived in these hard times, while the City groaned. Commerce, in the leading columns, was dying by inches, wearied to death by the First Consul; but Commerce in other columns—columns ruled for £. s. and d.—was comfortably investing sums at bankers, and thought less of consuls than consols.

But a Panic, long expected, was due, and was not to

be averted by peace or war. Wise heads had shaken over the prophecy for months; foolish buttons had been held by sagacious fingers, while other sagacious forefingers shook the fact in the faces of the sceptical; old gentlemen, grey with the knowledge of this great world of Threadneedle-street had solemnly vowed between pears and coffee that come it would, sir, take my word for it. Speculation, sir, had been going on to a fearful extent: to an extent positively suicidal; and what with the tightness of the market, sir, mind me, and the value of bullion, and the price of gold and the rates of exchange and all the animal kingdom of the Stock Exchange, a crisis—a terrible crisis—was at hand: an ordeal which only the firm ones of earth should survive. For it is a City faith that these spasms administered by aggrieved Nature to Commerce are only sent for the destruction of puny enterprises, and that the great enterprises shall weather the storm—a favourite phrase in Capel Court. So you were now requested to observe, sir, that the little ones might not, could not, would not weather this storm, and that the great ones might deem themselves lucky if they weathered it. Opinion was divided as to the weatherers: it might be this firm or that bank, these brokers or those capitalists: but none as to the weather. It was brooding, brooding near: a storm was coming and the winds were not still.

In company with the favoured few or many whose pounds and shillings were not tighter in their pockets than a full purse expressed, Mr. Throgmorton thrived wonderfully. He had been accustomed to walk into the City or to be driven thither in the cab of the hireling: he now drove in his own. He had moved from the house in Great Russell-street to a high, dreary, desolate habitation in George-street, Hanover-square, where the monotony of that monotonous St. George's was on the whole neighbourhood. Mr. Throgmorton had required little persuasion from wife and daughter to take this step—the first which betokens rise in prosperity. "Liveliness, my dear," the Delectus would say, "you cannot always expect to have, indeed, unless in the City, with omnibuses and blocks from year to year, and the crossings never swept, but mud all about your office, it may be; but when you come home you naturally expect quiet—and what quieter than this? Not only so, but an exceedingly good neighbourhood, so near to everywhere, except, perhaps, Putney, where, as a rule, people do not want to go, especially in those small boats, and the watermen far from young and by no means jolly, unless it be from drink. So what neighbourhood could be, under these circumstances, and considering all things, better, were it not for a little circumstance which is objectionable when carried so far; and, my dear, I need not say I allude to a man with a loud voice at seven in the morning in the street, whose cry of 'Ya-ha-ha Goree!' you would never know to mean water-cresses unless you were told, and even if so, why come at seven in the morning?"

So they set up the house in George-street, and prepared to weather the storm. It was but consistent with the rise in his dwelling (actual, for this house had ever so many storeys), and the rise in his fortunes, that Mr. Throgmorton's influence should rise too; and accordingly you might have seen him those many years ago the great and shining light of his time. It was long since, reader dear, in the days of our grandmothers, and when the possession of money was held almost identical with the possession of virtue. It is different now—now when we have much advanced, brethren, and hold sordid dress in so lofty a contempt that we have discarded the luxurious copper and adopted the sterner bronze—it is different now, and seems incomprehensible. Yet then and now and for ever to come this great law holds: that benevolent opulence shall always be well regarded on earth. It is not the golden calf we adore, oh tribes, set up on a sorry pole by Aaron the pander, but the golden cow that yields us golden milk. Let Dives do something with his money—build us a hospital, a church, a drinking fountain—open us a park—preside for us at the great Association for the Advancement of Social Silliness—nay, even dine with us and make speeches after dinner, and our worship shall be his, despite the second commandment.

So prosperous philanthropy rose in the bad world, and took its shining head into all sorts of schemes for the good of the race. Mr. Throgmorton was manager of half a dozen companies, and director of a dozen more, and had his commercial irons in all sorts of fires, but he had a reserve of spiritual irons still, and these he proceeded to dispose of. He had dined many times with the Corporation, had replied to a toast proposed once by a noble minister, "The City and Commerce;"

but that was not enough. He had subscribed to charities without end, and headed the lists with his name; but that was not enough. He had his stake and interest vested in the holy Church throughout all the world, by the number of Missions and Causes and Aids he supported; but that was not enough. Should he go into Parliament and advance mankind there? Perhaps—presently; but not yet. He thought he would follow the example of all the golden cows who have given milk to the people. He would build an Infirmary.

If he had lived in this day, he would have decided on a Library, as suited to the spirit of the happier time, ever more mindful of the poor man's mind than of his body. But it was a material age, that, and had been boring about the subject of ameliorating the unfortunate classes, ever since the days of Howard and Elizabeth Fry: the age did not do much, but it talked a good deal. An Infirmary was a nice expensive luxury to be able to afford, and charity uncovers such a multitude of virtues!

See him, then, heralded by a stream of glorifiers—banners, mottoes, societies, processions, providences, brothers with aprons and every triangle in Euclid, brass bands, and volunteers—setting forth one bright sunny morning to lay the foundation stone of the Infirmary. How the crowds shout when he joins the stream in George-street and out of his handsome carriage bows his glorious white hairs! How venerable, how truly noble—with what a beneficent purpose does he use the root of all good, his money! Lucy, drawn a little back from the window, radiant with blushes as if it had been her own wedded happiness the people were sounding, loves him dearly—is proud of him—would go to the stake or scaffold, if need be, cheerfully for such a father. Emily, hands twined and arms round waists, is sympathetic, and wishes his son far away could only see him. Good Mrs. Throgmorton wiping her eyes with a sarsnet favour in the absence of a pocket handkerchief, is incoherent with emotion, and gives vent to a little rivulet of incomprehensibility, in which portions of the marriage-service now and then unaccountably break out. Tom, the ward, who on the strength of having a taste for thumping feeble-intentioned pianos has been sent to a certain Royal Academy which has never yet produced anything beyond an eminent music-publisher or two, thinks of writing a grand opera on the scene before him, but finds a difficulty in assigning the tenor part to Mr. Throgmorton. Orpwood and the disciples are all in the procession in bran new clothes and the creamiest of favours, of whom, next to Orpwood himself, the most resplendent is Joe. For Joe has arrived from somewhere—Glasgow, it is believed, but he insists on Ceylon—to be present at the ceremony, and has taken so many "pick-me-ups" during the morning by way of stringing his nerves, that he is more or less oblivious of everything that is going on, but no less eminently aristocratic; and he has bought for the occasion a mouse-coloured suit, such as was never seen before and never will be since; attired in which he looks like a polished rodent of imbibing propensities.

See too beneficent opulence at the laying of the stone. When all the triangles and the big eyes on the banners have stopped and form a phalanx round him, with circling mottoes of "THROGMORTON THE BENEFACTOR," "THE CITY'S FRIEND," "WEALTH, WORTH AND WISDOM," and such like bursts of sentiment, see him descend from his carriage and receive an address. Oh ye lovers of humanity, what an address! Never before or since in the eyes of the Mayor, Corporation and Burgesses addressing, did mortal man ever achieve so much for his fellow creatures as grant a slice of money to build that Infirmary—exception being refused even to the milder historical instances of benefaction as have been from time to time advanced by Moses, Maccabees, Coriolanus, Washington and a few more. All these lesser lights dwindle to insignificance beside the man that has built an Infirmary.

This is forced on the public mind in the address, in the speeches at the banquet, in the glowing leaders of morning journals. When he lays his head down at night, what kind angels must hover around his bed and comfort him in sleep with little extracts in his honour from the address and the newspapers!

It was all over—the deed and its praise—and the next day Mr. Throgmorton was quietly at his office reading over the papers. His letters lay unopened before him, for he wished first to see what the press had to say of the proceedings of the day before. They had a great deal to say and said it in the roundest manner;

one commencing a few general remarks in big type with an allusion to Cornelius Nepos and several dates B. C.; another artfully leading his remarks up to a certain point, so as to introduce the phrase, "Divitiarum formae gloria aeternaque habetur," and informing his readers that Sallust wrote that; a third contemptuously eschewing history and classics, but making a great point of Mr. Throgmorton's being a Briton and a Man. This last journal also feelingly alluded to the poor man's weary limbs, and to the poor man's long-balked inclination to stretch them. "When the poor man," said the journal, "shall stretch his weary limbs on the couch of pain, he will turn with a sigh of gratitude and bless the name of him, who provided that rest for him." Which was a little illogical but very well meant.

Mr. Throgmorton put down the papers with a glow of satisfaction and opened his letters. Why should the good man start at the breaking of the first seal; why blanch to a paleness rivaling the whiteness of his hair? Another letter—another—and the white head fell on the desk before him, and the eyes were dim and glazed. Old man, old man, a moment ago you made up that little mental balance you ever keep with the Divine Dispenser, and entered a good round sum to your credit on account of that Infirmary. Surely He has not so ignored the daybook system as to deal a heavy blow on you now!

There was a running about the City that day and the scuffling of many feet and the buzz of a thousand selfish terrified throats. In and out of Throgmorton's office, in and out of this office and that, rushing through narrow lanes, button-holding at corners, faces with a pale scared look. Here and there were shutters up at certain barred windows, and ominous placards at the closed doors. What did it all mean?

There were different readings of what it meant. To the old man in his arm-chair sitting with ghastly face but issuing directions in a calm equable tone, it had a deep dread signification. It meant that the Panic had commenced, and that to all intents and purposes John Throgmorton was a ruined man.

(To be continued.)

Pastime.

CONUNDRUMS.

Why is a man with a cork leg never likely to be forgotten by his friends? Because he is re-membered.

What is that which everyone wishes for, and yet tries to get rid of? A good appetite.

Why is a lady's belt like a scavenger? Because it goes around and gathers up the waist.

Which fish is the greatest orator? The whale, as we often hear of his *spouting*.

What two vegetables would be like money itself, in India? Rue, Peas (rupees).

Why is a bachelor's party like Joan of Arc? Because it's made of all her *uns*.

CHARADES.

I.

When first I married Sarah Ann my happiness was pure; I took my bride to Ireland upon our marriage tour. I don't know why to Ireland, except that I can't bother My mind with thought, and that's as good a place as any other.

When we were there I hired my first (for I was always reckoned

A tidy whip) and drove about my little darling second. When we got home I found the Pa of my dear Sarah Ann

Had sent my whole from Brussels. Ah, he always was a man!

The act was kind: upon my whole I sat me at her feet, And then, as I remarked before, my bliss was quite complete.

II.

Yes! all the beauty that in life
Can e'er be realised
May in one little darling word
Be faithfully comprised;
That is my first, and should that be
In future years my own,
Powerful to bring the happy day
My second gleams alone.
Ah! nought I seek beyond that lot,
No palace rich or rare,
Content to live in lowly cot,
And on my whole to fare.

ANSWERS TO CHARADES IN OUR LAST.

None of our readers have guessed No. III of the Charades, which is "Wall-ace," and refers to Mr. Vincent Wallace at that time staying at Boulogne-sur-mer.

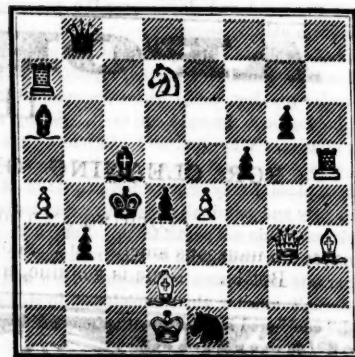
FIRST AND SECOND CHARADE.—Helen Armstrong; Jones (Trin. Coll.); L.R.; Cenerentola; Julia Sprouts Thomas (Wellington Road); Frederick B.; Miggy's Papa (Miggy's papa had a shy also at the third but failed horribly); W. Collins; Beatrice Grey, M. D.

FIRST.—Tollerye; Ada Cavendish; General Peel; Joe; F.C.K. Caution; Dites-moi; Nellie; Arab O'Sheether; Lucy T.; G. L.

SECOND.—Paul Ferrol; S. M.; Aimée; Joeky Tamson (Newhaven); Wee Wife (Fife); Kate Dalrymple; Matthew Fraser; Old Man (Cockpen); Shaggy; John Brown.

CHESS.—PROBLEM IV.

BLACK.



WHITE.

White to play, and mate in 3 moves.

SOLUTION TO PROBLEM III.

WHITE.

1. B to Q B 5

2. B to Q 4

3. K to Q 6

4. P takes P, mate.

BLACK.

1. Kt P moves

2. P takes B

3. P moves.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

OUR NUMBER FOR JANUARY will be ready for delivery to the trade early in December, in order that the contents, which will be peculiarly those of a Christmas number, may be made available for Drawing-room Amusement during the holiday season. The following will be amongst the special features of the January number:—

FOUR CHRISTMAS LEGENDS, A COPYRIGHT SONG,

BY VINCENT WALLACE,

Pastime, Rebus, Songs, Conundrums, &c., for the season, AND AN ORIGINAL

CHARADE OPERETTA,

Scored for Voice and Piano, IN THREE SCENES.

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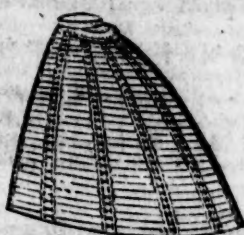
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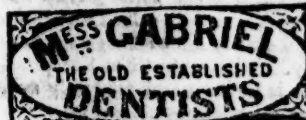
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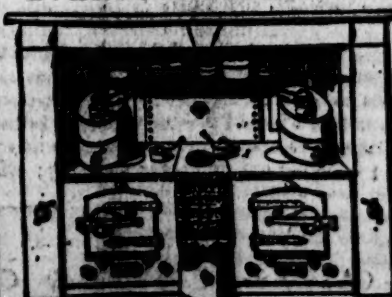
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